"THE WATCHER FROM THE SKY" by AUGUST DERLETH

Weird Tales

JULY

Robert Bloch

Ray Bradbury

15¢

by Edmond Hamilton

"THE INN OUTSIDE THE WORLD"

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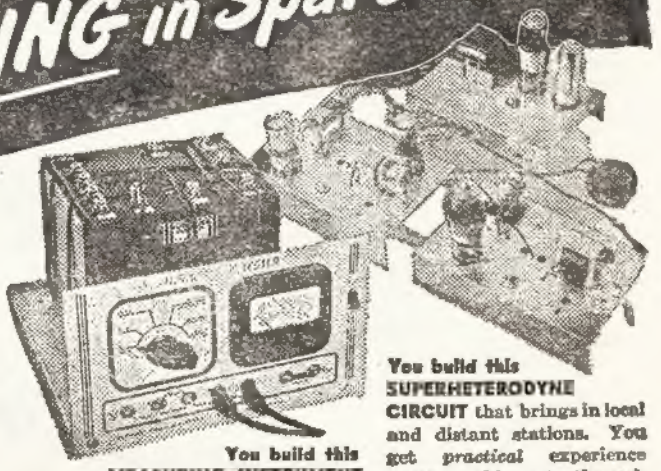

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July, 1945

Cover by Lee Brown Coye

LONG NOVELETTE

THE WATCHER FROM THE SKY . . . . . **August Derleth** **6**
The laws of space and time may be thrust aside by ancient evil known only to a few men whose voices cry in the wilderness of disbelief

NOVELETTE

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The dogs, creeping through the jungle faster than a man could travel in the open, were a Godsend — most of them!

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Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.

Published bi-monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter January 26, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 15 cents. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions, 90¢. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. English Office: Charles Lavell, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2, England. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. Copyright, 1945, by Weird Tales. Copyrighted in Great Britain.
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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Vol. 38, No. 6

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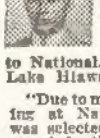

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The Watcher from the Sky

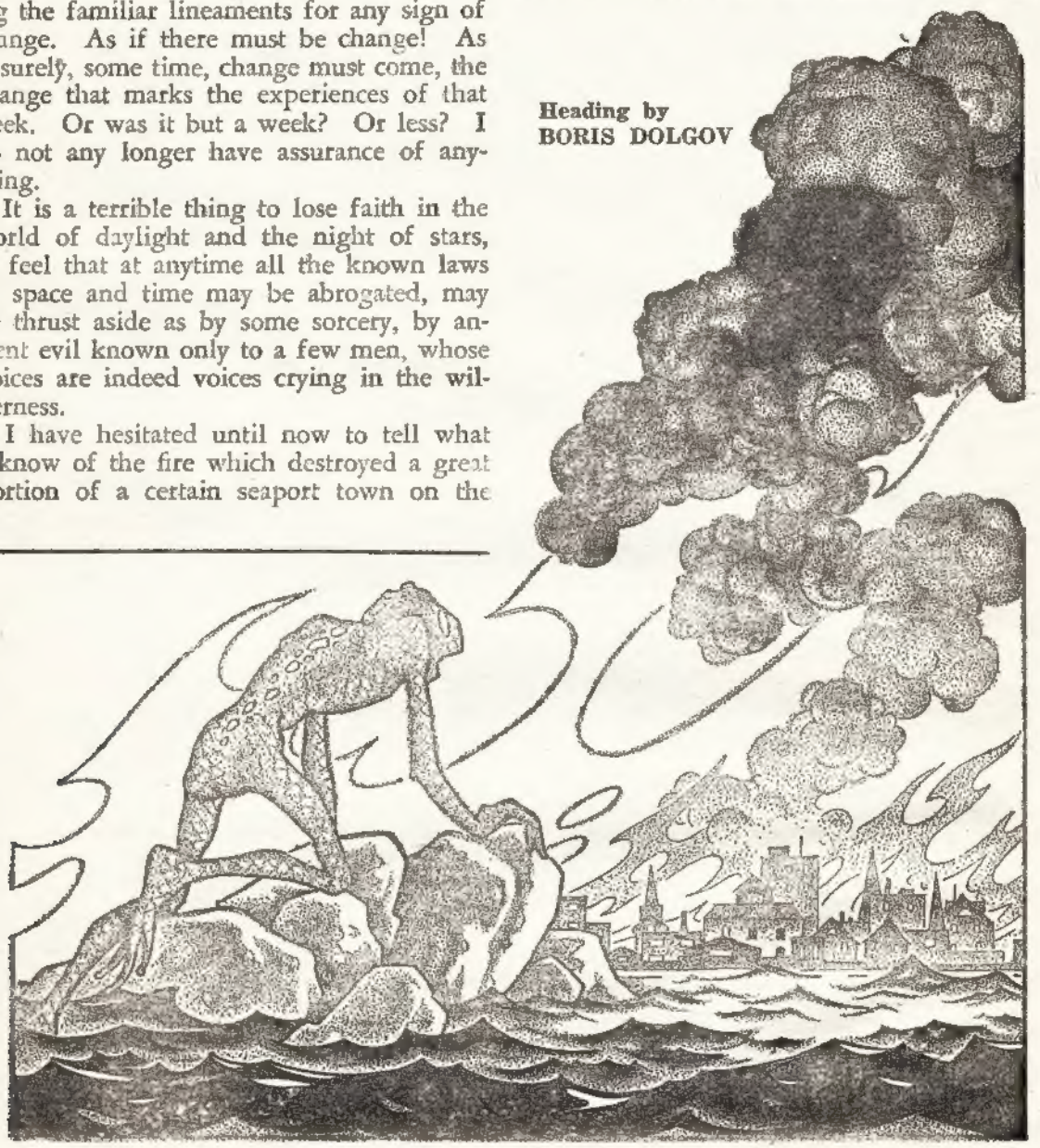
I

"ABEL KEANE . . . Abel Keane . . . Abel Keane. . . ."

Sometimes I am constrained to speak my name aloud, as if to reassure myself that all is as before, that indeed I am Abel Keane; and I find myself walking to the mirror and looking at myself, scrutinizing the familiar lineaments for any sign of change. As if there must be change! As if surely, some time, change must come, the change that marks the experiences of that week. Or was it but a week? Or less? I do not any longer have assurance of anything.

It is a terrible thing to lose faith in the world of daylight and the night of stars, to feel that at anytime all the known laws of space and time may be abrogated, may be thrust aside as by some sorcery, by ancient evil known only to a few men, whose voices are indeed voices crying in the wilderness.

I have hesitated until now to tell what I know of the fire which destroyed a great portion of a certain seaport town on the Massachusetts coast, of the abomination which existed there, but events have dictated that I hesitate no longer. There are things men should not know, and it is always difficult for any one man to decide whether to make certain facts known, or to hold them in abeyance. There was a reason for the fire—a reason known only to two people,



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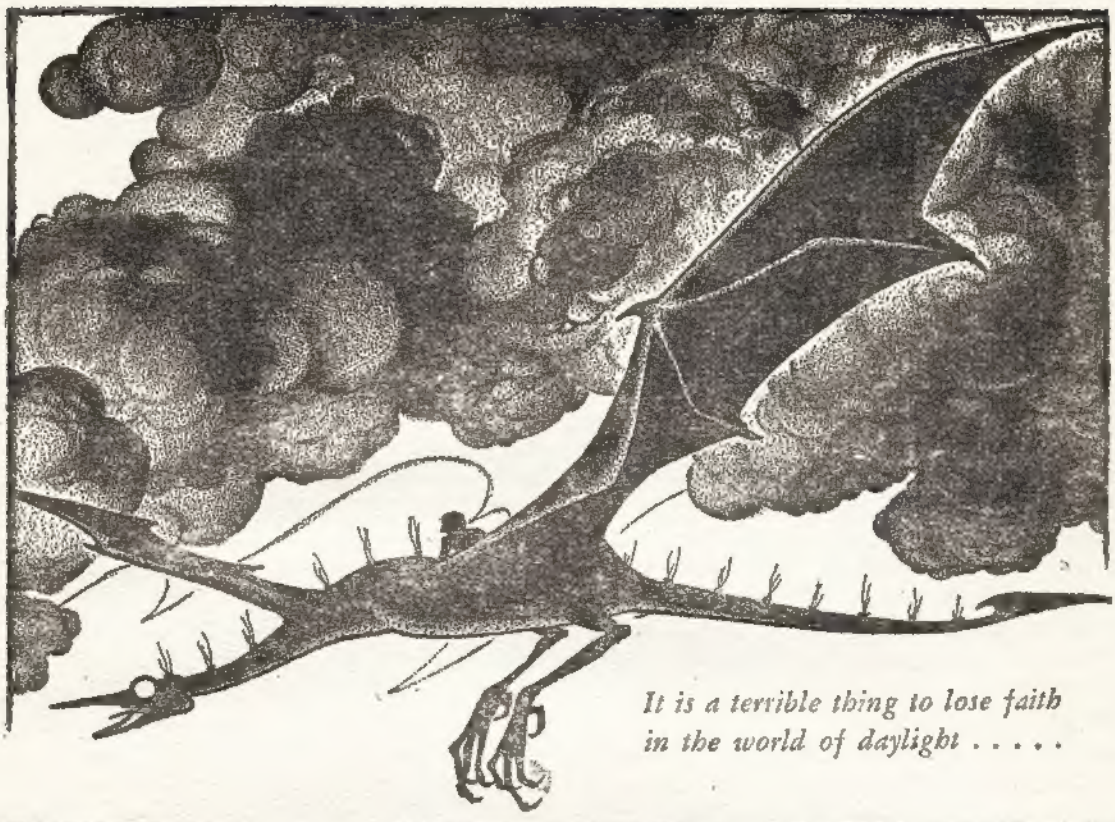


It is a terrible thing to lose faith in the world of daylight . . . . .

By AUGUST DERLETH

though surely there were others who suspected—but not outside that shunned town. It has been said that if any man had a vision of the incredible vastnesses of outer space and the knowledge of what exists there, that alone would drive him stark, raving mad. But there are things that go on within the boundaries of our own small earth which are no less frightening, things that bind us to the entire cosmos, to colossi of time and space, to evil and horror so old, so ancient that the entire history of mankind is but a vapor on the air beside them.

Of such was the reason for that destructive fire, that fire which destroyed far more than it was meant to destroy, block after block of that loathed town across to the Manuxet on the one side and to the shore of the sea on another. They called it arson —but only for a little while. They found some of those little stones—but there was nothing but one mention in the papers of either arson or those peculiar stone pieces. The townspeople saw to that; they were quick to suppress it; their own fire examiners put out an entirely different story. They said that the man who was lost in the fire had fallen asleep beside his lamp and had knocked it over, and that that was the way the fire started. . . .

But it was arson, technically speaking—justifiable arson. . . .

II

EVIL is the special province, surely, of the student of divinity.

Such was I on that Summer night when I unlocked the door of my room at my lodging house, Number 17, Thoreau Drive, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts—and found lying on my bed a strange young man, clad in alien garments, lying in a deep sleep from which I could not at first awaken him. Since my door was locked, he must have entered by way of the open window—but of how he had come, by what incredible passage, I was not immediately to know.

After my initial surprise had passed, I examined my visitor. He was a young man

of approximately thirty years of age; he was clean-shaven, dark-skinned, and lithe; he was clothed in loose-flowing robes of a material foreign to me, and he wore sandals made from the leather of some beast whose identity was unknown to me. Though it was evident that he carried various articles in the pockets of that strange clothing, I did not examine them. He was in a sleep so deep that it was impossible to awaken him, and evidence showed that he had virtually fallen across the bed and had gone instantly to sleep.

I discovered at once that there was something familiar about his features—familiar with that strange insistence so commonly associated with people whom one has known before, perhaps casually, but nevertheless has known. Either I had my visitor's acquaintance, or I had seen his picture somewhere. It occurred to me at this point that I might well attempt to learn his identity while he slept, and accordingly I drew a chair up to the bed and sat down beside my visitor, intending to practise auto-suggestion, which I had learned from indulgence in my lesser professional existence—for, while working my way through divinity school, I appeared thrice weekly on public and occasionally on private stages as an amateur hypnotist, and some small study of the human mind had enabled me to accomplish various trivial successes in mind-reading and allied matters.

However, deep as his sleep was, he was *aware*.

I cannot explain this even now, but it was as if, though his body slept, his senses did not, for he spoke as I leaned above him, motivated by my intention; and he spoke out of a patent awareness which must be related to his strange way of life about which I learned later, a development from a super-sensory existence.

"Wait," he said. And then, "Be patient, Abel Keane."

And suddenly a most curious reaction was manifest within myself; it felt precisely as if someone or something had invaded me, as if my visitor spoke to me without words to tell me his name, for his lips did not appear to move, yet I was distinctly aware of the impression of words. "I am Andrew Phelan. I left this room two years ago; I have come back for a little while." Thus directly, thus simply, I knew; and I knew too that I had seen Andrew Phelan's likeness in the Boston papers at the time of his utterly outré disappearance from this very room two years previously, a disappearance never satisfactorily explained.

Excitement possessed me.

So strong was my impression of his *awareness,* despite his aspect of sleep, that I could not forebear asking him, "Where have you been?"

"Celaeno," came his prompt reply, but whether he actually spoke, or whether he merely communicated it to me without words, I cannot now say.

And where was Celaeno? I wondered.

He woke at two o'clock in the morning. Tired myself, I had fallen into a light slumber, from which I was awakened by his hand on my shoulder. I was startled and gazed up to find his firm eyes looking steadily and appraisingly at me. He was still clad in his curious robe, but his first thought was for clothing.

"Have you an extra suit?"

"Yes."

"I shall need to borrow it. We are not unlike in build, and I cannot go out like this. Will you mind?"

"No—by all means."

"I am sorry to have deprived you of your bed, but my long journey tired me very much."

"If I may ask, how did you get in?"

He gestured to the window.

"Why here?"

"Because this room was my point of contact," he anwered enigmatically. He then looked at his watch. "The suit now, if you don't mind. My time is short."

I felt impelled to get the clothing he wished, and did so. When he disrobed, I saw that he was very strong, very muscular, and he moved with an agility that made me doubt my first guess as to his age. I said nothing as he dressed; he remarked casually on the good fit of the suit, which was not my best, though it was neat and clean and had just been pressed. I told him equally as casually that he was welcome to it for as long as he needed it.

"The landlady is still Mrs. Brier?" he asked then.

"Yes."

"I hope you will say nothing to her of me; it would only trouble her."

"To no one?"

"No one."

He began to move to the door, and instantly I apprehended that he meant to be gone. At the same time I was aware of not wanting him to leave without imparting to me more information about the mystery which had remained unsolved for two years. Rashly, I sprang up and threw myself between him and the door.

He looked at me with calm, amused eyes.

"Wait!" I cried. "You can't go like this! What is it you want? Let me get it for you."

He smiled. "I seek evil, Mr. Keane—evil that is more terrible than anything taught in your school of divinity, believe me."

"Evil is my field, Mr. Phelan."

"I guarantee nothing," he replied. "The risks are too great for ordinary men."

AN INSANE impulse took possession of me. I was seized with the urgent desire to accompany my visitor, even if it became necessary to hypnotize him. I fixed his strange eyes with mine, I reached out my hands—and then something happened to me. I found myself suddenly on another plane, in another dimension, as it were. I felt that I had taken Andrew Phelan's place on the bed, and yet accompanied him in spirit. For instantly, soundlessly, painlessly, I was out of this world. Nothing else would describe the sensations I experienced for the remainder of that night.

I saw, I heard, I felt and tasted and smelled things utterly alien to my consciousness. He did not touch me! he only looked at me. Yet I apprehended instantly that I stood on the edge of an abyss of horror unimaginable! Whether he led me to the bed or whether I made my own way there I do not know; yet it was on the bed that I found myself in the morning after those memorable hours of the remainder of that night. Did I sleep and dream? Or did I lie in hypnosis and know because Phelan willed me to know all that took place? It was better than for my sanity to believe that I dreamed.

And what dreams! What magnificent and yet terror-fraught images wrought by the sub-conscious! And Andrew Phelan was everywhere in those dreams. I saw him in that darkness making his way to a bus station, taking a bus; I saw him in the bus, as if I sat beside him; I saw him alight at ancient, legend-haunted and shunned Innsmouth, after changing buses at Akrham. I was beside him when he prowled down along that wrecked waterfront with its sinister ruins—and I saw where he paused, before that disguised refinery, and later at that one-time Masonic hall which now bore over its doorway the curious legend: *Esoteric Order of Dagon.* And yet more—I witnessed the beginning of that strange pursuit, when the first of those hideous batrachian men emerged from the shadows along the Manuxet River and took up the trail of Andrew Phelan, the uncanny silent followers after the seeker of evil, until Phelan turned his steps away from Innsmouth. . . .

All night long, hour after hour, until the sun rose, and dream and actuality became one, and I opened my eyes to look at Andrew Phelan entering my room. I pulled myself together, smiling sheepishly, and swung to the edge of the bed, where I sat looking at him.

"I think you owe me an explanation," I said.

"It is better not to know too much," he answered.

"One cannot fight evil without knowledge," I retorted.

He said nothing in reply, but I pressed him. He sat down somewhat wearily. Did he not think that some explanation ought to be given me? I demanded. He then countered with an enigmatic suggestion that there were certain age-old horrors which were better left unrevealed; this only excited my curiosity the more. Did it not occur to me, he wanted to know, that there might be certain dislocations in space and time infinitely more terrible than any known horror? Had I never thought that there might be other planes, other dimensions beyond the known planes and dimensions? Had I not considered that space might exist in conterminous folds, that time might be a dimension capable of being traveled backward as well as forward? He spoke to me thus in riddles, and carried on in this

fashion despite all my attempts to question him.

"I am only trying to protect you, Keane," he said finally, still with infinite patience.

"Did you escape your pursuer in Innsmouth last night?"

He nodded.

"You knew of him, then?"

"Yes, or you would not have been aware of him, for in your—shall we say hypnosis? —you could know only such things of which I was cognizant. I suggest to you, Keane, that hypnotism is a dangerous means; I thought it might serve as a warning if it were turned back upon you last night."

"That was not alone hypnotism."

"Perhaps not as you know it." He made a gesture of dismissal. "Would it be possible for me to rest here for a while today before pursuing my quest? I would not like to be discovered by Mrs. Brier."

"I'll see to it that you're not disturbed."

Even as I spoke, I had made up my mind what to do; I was determined that Andrew Phelan would not put me off so easily, and there was one course left open to me—I could discover certain things for myself. Despite his caution, my visitor had dropped hints and suggestions. Even beyond them, however, there was the mystery of Andrew Phelan itself; that had been extensively recorded in the daily papers of that time; certainly in those accounts I might expect to discover some clue. I abjured Phelan to make himself comfortable, and departed, ostensibly for the college; but instead, once outside, I telephoned to excuse myself from that day's study. Then, after a light breakfast, I took myself off to the Widener Library in Cambridge.

Andrew Phelan had said that he had come from Celaeno. This hint was too patent for me to overlook; so forthwith I set myself to track down Celaeno. I found it sooner than I had expected to find it—but it solved nothing. If anything, it served only to deepen the mystery of Andrew Phelan.

For Celaeno was one of the stars in the Pleiades cluster of Taurus!

I TURNED next to the files of the newspapers concerning Phelan's vanishing, early in September, 1938. I hoped to discover in the accounts of this remarkable disappearance without trace from out of the window of that same room to which he had now returned, something to lead me to some feasible explanation. But as I read the accounts, my perplexity deepened; there was a singularly complete puzzlement expressed in the newspapers. But there were certain dark hints, certain vague and ominous suggestions which fastened to my awareness. Phelan had been employed by Dr. Laban Shrewsbury of Arkham. Like Phelan, Dr. Shrewsbury had spent some years in a strange and never-explained absence from his home, to which he had returned as queerly as now Andrew Phelan had come back. Shortly before Phelan's disappearance, Dr. Shrewsbury's house, together with the doctor himself, had been destroyed by fire. Phelan's tasks had apparently been secretarial, but he had spent a good deal of his time in the Library of Miskatonic University in Arkham.

So it seemed to me that the only definite clue offered to me at the Widener was in Arkham; for the records of the Miskatonic University Library should certainly reveal what books Phelan had consulted—presumably in the interests of the late Dr. Shrewsbury. Only an hour had now elapsed; there was ample time for me to pursue my search; so forthwith I took a bus out of Boston for Arkham, and in a comparatively short time, I was put down not far from the institution within the walls of which I believed I would discover some further information about Andrew Phelan's pursuits.

My inquiry about the records of books used by Andrew Phelan was met with a curious kind of reticence, and resulted in my being shown ultimately into the office of the director of the library, Dr. Llanfer, who wished to know why I sought to consult certain books always kept under lock and key by the express order of the library's directors. I explained that I had become interested in the disappearance of Andrew Phelan, and in the work he had been doing.

His eyes narrowed. "Are you a reporter?"

"I am a student, sir." Fortunately, I had with me my college credentials, and lost no time in showing them to him.

"Very well." He nodded and, however

reluctantly, wrote out the desired permission on a slip of paper and handed it to me. "It is only fair to tell you, Mr. Keane, that of the several people who have consulted these books at length, few—if any—are alive to tell about it."

On this singularly sinister note I was shown out of his office, and presently found myself being conveyed to a little room that was hardly more than a cubicle, where I sat down while the attendant assigned to me placed before me certain books and papers. Chief among them, and obviously the most prized possession of the library, judging by the almost reverent way in which the attendant handled it, was an ancient volume entitled simply the *Necronomicon,* by an Arab, Abdul Alhazred. The records showed that Phelan had consulted this volume on several occasions, but, much to my chagrin, it was clear that this volume was not for the uninitiate, for it contained references which for ambiguity were unexcelled. But of one thing I could be certain—the book pertained to evil and horror, to terror and fear of the unknown, to things that walk in the night, and not alone the little night of man, but that vaster, deeper, more mysterious night of the world—the dark side of existence.

I turned from this book in near despair, and found myself looking into a manuscript copy of a book by Professor Shrewsbury: *Cthulhu in the Necronomicon.* And in these pages, quite by accident—for this book, too, consisted of learned and scholarly paragraphs concerning the lore of the Arab, most of them utterly beyond my comprehension—I came upon a certain reference which imparted to me, in the light of what small experience I had already had, a frightening chill and a feeling of the utmost dread. For, as I scanned the pages with their enigmatic allusions to beings and places utterly alien to me, I found in the midst of a quotation purporting to be from another book entitled the *R'lyeh Text,* the following: *"Great Cthulhu shall rise from R'lyeh, Hastur the Unspeakable shall return from the dark star which is in the Hyades near Aldebaran . . . Nyarlathotep shall howl forever in the darkness where he abideth, Ehub-Niggurath shall spawn his thousand young . . ."*

I read—and read again. It was incredible, damnable—but for the second time within twenty-four hours, I had come upon reference to unbelievable spaces, and to stars—to a star in the Hyades, a star in Taurus—and surely it could be none other than Celaeno!

And, as if in mocking answer to the question which loomed so large before me, I turned over this manuscript, and found below it a portfolio labeled in a strong if spidery hand: *Celaeno Fragments!* I drew it toward me, and found it sealed. At this, the aged attendant, who had been observing me closely, came over.

"It has never been opened," he said.

"Not even by Mr. Phelan?"

He shook his head. "Since it came by Mr. Phelan's hand, with Dr. Shrewsbury's seal on it, we do not believe he had access to it. We do not know."

I looked at my watch. Time was passing now, and I meant to go on to Innsmouth before I completed my day. Reluctantly, and yet with a strange sense of foreboding, I pushed away the manuscripts and books.

"I will come again," I promised. "I want to get to Innsmouth before too much of the day has gone.

The attendant favored me with a curious and reflective gaze. "Yes, it is better to visit Innsmouth by day," he said finally.

I PONDERED this while the old man gathered up the papers and books. Then I said, "That is surely a curious statement to make, Mr. Peabody. Is there anything wrong with Innsmouth?"

"Ah, do not ask me. *I* have never gone there. I have no desire to go there. There are things, strange things enough in Arkham, without the need for going on to Innsmouth. But I have heard things—terrible things, Mr. Keane, such things that it may well be said of them that it is of no account whatever whether or not they are true, but of account only that they are being said. What they do say of the Marshes, who have the Refinery there . . ."

"Refinery!" I cried, remembering my dream.

"Yes. It was old Obed Marsh first, old Captain Obed—they said—well, what does it matter? He is gone, and now it is Ahab

who is there, Ahab Marsh—his great-grandson—and he is no longer young. But he is not old, either; they do not get very old in Innsmouth."

"What did they say of Obed Marsh?"

"It does not matter to tell it, I suppose. Perhaps it is an old wives' tale—that he was leagued with the devil and brought a great plague to Innsmouth in 1846, and that those who came after him were bound by compacts with unearthly beings from beyond that Devil Reef off Innsmouth Harbor, and brought about the destruction by dynamite of many old houses and the wharves along the seashore there during the winter of 'twenty-seven and 'eight. There are not many living there, and no one likes the Innsmouth people."

"Race prejudice?"

"It is something about them—they do not seem like people—that is, people like the rest of us. I saw one of them once—he made me think—you may think it an old man's aberration, but I assure you it is not; he made me think of a frog!"

I was shaken. The creature who had so shadowily crept after Andrew Phelan in my dream or vision of the night before had seemed bestially frog-like. I was at the same time possessed of the urgent desire to go to Innsmouth and see for myself the places of my dream-haunted repose.

Yet when I stood before Hammond's Drug Store in Market Square, waiting for the ancient and shunned bus which carried venturesome travelers to Innsmouth and went on to Newburyport, I had a sense of impending danger so strong that I could not shake it off. Despite my insistent curiosity, I was sharply, keenly aware of a kind of sixth sense prompting me not to take the bus driven by that queer, sullen-visaged fellow, who brought the bus to a stop and came out to walk briefly, suggestively stooped, into Hammond's before setting forth on the journey to Innsmouth, the final object of my somewhat aimless search that day.

I did not yield to that prompting, but climbed into the bus, which I shared with but one other passenger, whom I knew instinctively to be an Innsmouth resident, for he, too, had a strange cast of features, with odd, deep creases in the sides of his neck, a narrow-headed fellow who could not have been more than forty, with the bulging, watery blue eyes and flat nose and curiously undeveloped ears which I was to find so shockingly common in that shunned seaport town toward which the bus soon began to roll. The driver, too, was manifestly an Innsmouth man, and I began to understand what Mr. Peabody had meant when he spoke of the Innsmouth people as seeming somehow "not like people." To the end of comparison with that following figure of my dream, I scrutinized both my fellow-passenger and and the driver as closely, if furtively, as I could; and I was somewhat relieved to come to the conclusion that there was a subtle difference. I could not put my finger on it, but the follower of my dream seemed malign, in contrast to these people, who had merely that appearance so common to cretins and similar unfortunate individuals bearing the stigmata of lower intelligence in the realm of the sub-normal more especially than that of the abnormal.

I HAD never before been to Innsmouth. Having come down from New Hampshire to pursue my divinity studies, I had no occasion to travel beyond Arkham. Therefore, the town as I saw it as the bus approached it down the slope of the coastline there, had a most depressing effect on me for it was strangely dense, and yet seemed devoid of life. No cars drove out to pass us coming in, and of the three steeples rising above the chimney-pots and the crouching gambrel roofs and peaked gables, many of them sagging with decay, only one had any semblance whatsoever of use, for the others were weatherbeaten, with gaps in them where shingles had been torn away, and badly needed paint. For that matter, the entire town seemed to need paint—all, that is, save two buildings we passed, the two buildings of my dream, the refinery and that imposing, pillared hall standing among the churches which clustered about the radial point of the town's streets, with its black and gold sign on the pediment, so vividly remembered from my experience of the previous night—the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*. This structure, like that of the Marsh Refining Company along the Manuxet River, seemed to have been given a

coat of paint only recently. Apart from this, and a single store of the First National chain, all the buildings in what was apparently the business district of the town were repellantly old, with paint peeling from them, and their windows badly in need of washing. It was so, too, of the town generally, though the old residential streets of Broad, Washington, Lafayette, and Adams, where lived still those who were left of Innsmouth's old families—the Marshes, the Gilmans, the Eliots, and the Waites—were of a fresher appearance, not so much in obvious need of paint as of refurbishing, for the grounds grew wild and rank, and in many cases, fences—now overgrown with vines—had been constructed to make the casual view of passersby difficult.

Repelled as I was by the Innsmouth people, I stood for a few moments on the curb, after having left the bus and ascertained the hour when it would return to Arkham—at seven that evening—wondering just what course it would be best to follow. I had no desire to speak to the people of Innsmouth, for I had the strongest of forebodings that to do so was to court subtle and insidious danger; yet I continued to be impelled by the curiosity which had brought me here. It occurred to me as I stood pondering, that the manager of the First National chain store might very well not be one of the Innsmouth people; it was the custom of the chain to move its managers around, and there was just a chance that the man in charge of this store was an outsider—for among these people, it was inevitable that anyone from beyond the immediate vicinity would be made to feel tangibly that he was an outsider. Accordingly, I made my way over to the corner where the store stood, and entered it.

Contrary to my expectations, there were no clerks, but only a man of middle age, who was at work on a prosaic display of canned goods as I entered and asked for the manager. But clearly, he was the manager; he did not bear any of those oddly shocking distinguishing marks so common to the people of Innsmouth; so he was, as I had guessed, an outsider. I observed with a faint sense of unpleasant distaste that he was startled to look at me, and seemed hesitant to speak, but I realized immediately that this was no doubt due to his isolation among these curiously decayed people.

Having introduced myself, and observed aloud that I could recognize him for an outsider, like myself, I at once pursued my inquiry. What was it about these Innsmouth people? I wanted to know. What was the *Esoteric Order of Dagon?* And what was being said about Ahab Marsh?

His reaction was instantaneous. Nor was it entirely unexpected. He became agitated, he glanced fearfully toward the entrance to the store, and then came over to seize me almost roughly by the arm.

"We don't talk about such things here," he said in a harsh whisper.

His nervous fear was only too manifest.

"I am sorry if I distressed you," I went on, "but I am only a casual traveler and I am curious as to why such a potentially fine port should be all but abandoned. Indeed, it is virtually abandoned; the wharves have not been repaired, and many business places seem closed.

He shuddered. "Do *they* know you are asking questions?"

"You are the first person to whom I have spoken."

"Thank God! Take my advice and leave town as soon as you can. You can take a bus. . . ."

"I came in on the bus. I want to know something about the town."

He looked at me indecisively, glanced once more toward the entrance, and then, turning abruptly and walking along a counter toward a curtained door which apparently shut off his own quarters, he said, "Come along with me, Mr. Keane."

IN HIS own rooms at the rear of the store, he began, however reluctantly, to talk in harsh whispers, as if he feared the very walls might hear. What I wanted to know, he said, was impossible to tell, because there was no proof of it. All was talk, talk and the terrible decay of isolated families, intermarrying generation after generation. That accounted in part for what he called "the Innsmouth look." It was true, old Captain Obed Marsh held commerce with the far corners of the earth, and he brought strange things—and some said, strange practises like that seafarers' kind of pagan worship called

the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*—back to Innsmouth with him. It was said that he held stranger commerce with creatures that rose in the dark of the moon out of the deep sea beyond Devil Reef and met him at the reef, a mile and a half out from shore, but he knew of no one who had seen them, though it was said that in the winter of the year when the Federal government had destroyed the waterfront buildings, a submarine had gone out and discharged torpedoes *straight down* into the unfathomable depths beyond Devil Reef. He spoke persuasively and well; perhaps indeed he knew no more, but I felt undeniably the lacunae in his story—the unanswered questions being inherent in all that he said.

There were stories about Captain Obed Marsh, yes. Because of them, there were stories about all the Marshes. But there were stories about the Waites, the Gilmans, the Ornes, and the Eliots, too—about all the old, one-time wealthy families. And it was true that it was not wise to linger in the vicinity of the Marsh Refining Company building, or near the Order of Dagon Hall . . .

At this point our conversation was interrupted by the tinkling of the bell announcing a customer, and Mr. Henderson immediately left to answer the summons. I peered curiously from between the folds of the curtain and saw that a woman had come in—an Innsmouth woman, for her appearance was instantly chilling and repulsive; there was something more than just similarity to the men about her, there was a kind of almost reptilian menace, and she spoke in a thick mutation of speech, though Henderson seemed to understand it all right and waited on her without comment of any kind, save to answer her questions with an air that was rather more than just civil, almost subservient.

"That was one of the Waite women," he said in answer to my question when he returned. "They're all like that—and the Marsh women were before them. The Marshes are all gone now, all except Ahab . . . and the two old women."

"The little refinery still runs, then?"

"A little. The Marshes still have some ships; there was a long time after the government was here when they had nothing at all in the way of ships; then in the middle thirties they bought a few again, this Ahab came up from nobody knows where, just came in on a ship one night, they say, and took over where the Marshes left off. Cousin or great-grandson, they say. Saw him once, and that at a distance. Doesn't go out much—except to the Hall—the Marshes always did sort of run that show."

THE *Esoteric Order of Dagon*, he explained in response to my insistent prying, was a kind of ancient worship, pagan certainly, and outsiders were rigidly excluded from any knowledge of it. It was not healthy even to ask about it. My schooling rebelled at this, and I demanded to know what part the ministers of the other churches were playing in this? To this he responded with a further question: why not ask denominational headquarters for this district? I would discover that the various denominations disowned their own churches, and the pastors of those churches had sometimes simply disappeared, and at other times had undergone strange reversions to primitive and pagan ceremonies in their worship.

Everything he said was disturbing far beyond anything within the limits of my experience. And yet, what he said was not nearly so terrifying as what remained only implied in his words—the vague hints of terrifying evil, of evil from *outside*, the hideous suggestiveness of what had taken place between the Marshes and those creatures from the deep, the lurking unvoiced assumption of what went on at the meetings of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*. Something had happened here in 1928, something terrible enough to be kept out of the press, something to bring the Federal government down to the scene and to justify the havoc wrought along the ocean's edge in the wharf district of this old fishing town. I knew enough Biblical history to know that Dagon was the ancient fish-like god of the Philistines, who rose from the waters of the Red Sea, but there was ever present in my thoughts the belief that the Dagon of Innsmouth was but a fictive mask of that earlier pagan God, that the Dagon of Innsmouth was the symbol of something noxious and infinitely terrible, something

that might account not only for the curious aspect of the Innsmouth people, but also for the fact that Innsmouth was shunned and forsaken, let alone by the rest of the towns in its vicinity, and forgotten by the outside world.

I pressed the storekeeper for something definite, but he could not or would not give it; indeed, he began to act, as time wore on, as if I had already been told far too much, his agitation increased, and presently I thought it best to take my leave, though Henderson implored me not to carry on any overt investigation, saying at the last that people had been known to "drop out of sight, and the Lord alone knows where. Nobody ever found a clue as to where they went, and I reckon nobody ever will. But *they* know."

On this sinister note I took my leave.

Time did not permit much further exploration, but I managed to walk about a few of the streets and lanes of Innsmouth near the bus station, and found everything in a state of curious decay, and most of the buildings giving off besides that familiar odor of old wood and stone, a strange watery essence as of the sea. Farther I could not go, for I was disturbed by the queer glances given me by the few inhabitants I passed on the streets, and I was ever conscious of being under surveillance from behind closed doors and window curtains; but most of all, I was horribly aware of a kind of aura of malevolence, so keenly aware of it indeed that I was glad when at last the time came for me to take the bus and make my way back to Arkham and thence to my room in Boston.

III

ANDREW PHELAN was waiting for me when I returned.

The night was almost half gone, but Phelan had not left my room. I thought he looked at me a little pityingly when I entered.

"I have often wondered why it is that human curiosity is insatiable," he said, "but I suppose it is too much to expect that one who has had an experience like yours, so far from the norm of things as most of us know it, should accept it without seeking explanation other than that I gave you."

"You know?"

"Where you have been? Yes. Did anyone follow you, Abel?"

"I didn't look to see."

He shook his head mutely. "And did you learn what you sought to learn?"

I confessed that I was more puzzled than ever. And, yes, a little more disturbed than I had been at first. "Celaeno," I said "What have you been telling me?"

"We are both there," he said bluntly. "Dr. Shrewsbury and I."

FOR a moment I thought he was resorting to bluff; but there was something in his attitude that forbade levity. He was grim, unsmiling.

"You think that is impossible? You are bound by your own laws. Do not think further of it, but simply accept what I say for the time being. For years Dr. Shrewsbury and I have been on the trail of a great evil being, determined to close the avenues by which he may return to terrestial life out of his enchanted prison beneath the sea. Listen to me, Abel, and understand in what deadly peril you stood this afternoon in accursed Innsmouth."

Thereupon he launched into a soul-shaking account of incredible, ancient evil, of Great Old Ones akin to the elemental forces —the Fire-Being, Cthugha; the Water-Being; Cthulhu; the Lords of Air—Lloigor, Hastur the Unspeakable, Zhar, and Ithaqua; the Earth Creature, Nyarlathotep, and others—long ago cast out and imprisoned by the spells of the Elder Gods, who exist near the star Betelgueze—the Great Old Ones who have their minions, their secret followers among men and beasts, whose task it is to prepare the way for their second coming, for it is their evil intention to come again and rule the universe as once they did after their breaking away and escape from the domain of the Ancient Ones. What he told me then evoked frightening parallels to what I had read in those forbidden books at the Library of Miskatonic University only that afternoon, and he spoke in a voice of such conviction, and with such assurance that I found myself shaken free from the orthodox learning to which I had been accustomed.

The human mind, faced with something

utterly beyond its ken, inevitably reacts in one of two ways—its initial impulse is to reject *in toto*, its secondary to accept tentatively; but in the dread unfolding of Andrew Phelan's explanation there was the damnable, inescapable fact that only such an explanation would fit *all* the events which had taken place since his strange appearance in my room. Of the abominable tapestry of explanation which Phelan wove, several aspects were most striking, and at the same time most incredible. Dr. Shrewsbury and he, Phelan said, had been in search of the "openings" by means of which great Cthulhu might rise from where he lies sleeping "in his house at R'lyeh," an undersea place, Cthulhu apparently being amphibious; under the protection of an ancient, enchanted five-pointed carven gray stone from ancient Mnar, they need not fear the minions who served the Great Old Ones—the Deep Ones, the Shoggoths, the Tcho-Tcho People, the Dholes and the Voormis, the Valusians and all similar creatures—but their activities had finally aroused the superior beings directly serving great Cthulhu, against whom the five-pointed star is powerless; therefore, Dr. Shrewsbury and he had taken flight by summoning from interstellar spaces strange bat-like creatures, the servants of Hastur, Him Who Is Not to Be Named, ancient rival of Cthulhu, and, after having partaken of a golden mead which rendered them insensible to the effects of time and space and enabled them to travel in these dimensions, while at the same time heightening their sensory perceptions to an unheard-of extent, they set out for Celaeno, where they had resumed their studies in the library of monolithic stones with books and hieroglyphics stolen from the Elder Gods by the Great Old Ones at, and subsequent to, the time of the revolt from the benign authority of those Gods. Nevertheless, though on Celaeno, they were not unaware of what took place on earth, and they had learned that commerce was again being carried on between the Deep Ones and the strange people of haunted Innsmouth—and one of those people at least was a leader in preparing the way for the return of Cthulhu. To forestall that one, Dr. Shrewsbury had sent him, Andrew Phelan, back to earth.

"What was the commerce between the Innsmouth people and the creatures who came up out of the sea to Devil Reef?"

"Surely that should have been obvious to you in Innsmouth?"

"That storekeeper said it was too much intermarriage."

Phelan smiled grimly. "Yes—but not among those old families of Innsmouth; it was with those evil beings from the deep, from Y-ha-nthlei below Devil Reef. And the *Esoteric Order of Dagon* is but a deceptive name for their organization of worshippers to do the bidding of Cthulhu and his servants, to prepare the way, to open the gate into this upper world for their hellish dominion!"

I pondered this shocking revelation for a full minute before I offered anything more. Accepting everything Phelan had said—and his attitude seemed to say that it made no difference to him whether or not I believed him—it would appear that, as soon as his mission had been accomplished, Phelan himself planned to return to Celaeno. I put that to him. Yes, he admitted, it was so.

"Then you already know who it is in Innsmouth who is leading the people back once more to the worship of Cthulhu and the traffic with the Deep Ones?"

"Let us say rather that I suspect; it is the evident one."

"Ahab Marsh."

"Ahab Marsh, yes. It was his great-grandfather, Obed, who began it. Obed with his wide travels and the strange places he visited. Obed, we know now, encountered the Deep Ones on an island in the mid-Pacific—an island where no island should have been—and he opened the way for them to come to Innsmouth. The Marshes grew wealthy, but they were no more immune to that accursed physiological change than the others in that shunned and unholy settlement. The taint is in the blood now; it has been there for generations. The events of 1928-1929 when the Federal government invaded Innsmouth put a stop to it for only a few years, less than a decade. With the coming of Ahab Marsh—and none knows whence he came, though the two old Marsh women who were left accepted him as their own—the thing began once more, and this time less overtly, so that this time there will be no calling out to the Federals.

I have come out of the sky to watch and prevent horror from being spawned again on this earth. I cannot fail; I must succeed."

"But how?"

"Events will show. Tomorrow I am going to Innsmouth where I will continue to watch until I can take action."

"The storekeeper told me that all outsiders are watched and regarded with suspicion."

"But I will go in their guise."

ALL that night I lay sleepless beside Andrew Phelan, torn by the desire to accompany him. If his story were the figment of his imagination, surely it was a glorious and wondrous tale, calculated to stir the pulse and fire the mind; if it were not, then with equal certainty, it was as much my responsibility as it was his to lay hands upon and destroy the evil at Innsmouth, for evil is the ancient enemy of all good, whether as we who are Christians understand it or whether as it is understood in some prehistoric mythos. My studies in divinity seemed suddenly almost frivolous in contrast to what Phelan had narrated, though I confess that at that time I still entertained doubts of some magnitude, for how could I do else? Were not the monstrous entities of evil Phelan conjured up well nigh impossible to conceive, to say nothing of expecting belief in them? Indeed they were. Yet it is man's spiritual burden that he finds it so easy to doubt, always to doubt, and so difficult to believe even in the simplest things. And the striking parallel which forced itself upon me, a divinity student, a parallel which could not be overlooked, was plain—the similarity between the tale of the revolt of the Great Old Ones against the Ancient Gods, and that other, more universally known tale of the revolt of Satan against the forces of the Lord.

In the morning I told Phelan of my decision.

He shook his head. "It is good of you to want to help, Abel. But you have no real understanding of what it means. I've given you only a spare outline—nothing more. I would not be justified in involving you."

"The responsibility is mine."

"No, the responsibility is always that of the man who knows the facts. There is far more even than Dr. Shrewsbury and I already know to be learned. Indeed, I may say that we ourselves have hardly penetrated the perimeter of the whole—think, then, of how little you know!"

"I conceive it as a duty."

He gazed at me musingly, and I saw for the first time that his eyes were far older than his thirty years. "Let me see, you're twenty-seven now, Abel. Do you realize that if you persist in this decision, you may not have a future?"

I set out patiently to argue with him; I had already dedicated my life to the pursuit and destruction of evil, and this evil he offered me in his company was something more tangible than the evil that lurks in men's souls—he smiled and shook his head at this—and so we spent words back and forth. In the end he consented, though with a kind of cynicism I found galling.

The first step in our pursuit of the evil at Innsmouth was to shift our lodgings from Boston to Arkham, not only because of the proximity of Arkham to Innsmouth, but also because of the elimination of the risk of Phelan's being seen and recognized by my landlady, who would certainly focus highly undesirable publicity on him. And such publicity, in turn, would result in knowledge of his presence terrestrially once again being communicated to those creatures who had previously set out after Dr. Shrewsbury and Andrew Phelan and so forced their flight. No doubt the chase would begin again, in any case, but hopefully not before Phelan had accomplished what he had come back to do.

We moved that night.

Phelan did not think it wise of me to relinquish my Boston room, however, so I took a lease on it for a month—never dreaming how soon I would return to those familiar walls.

In Arkham we found a room in a comparatively new house on Curwen Street. Phelan later confided that the house stood on the site of Dr. Shrewsbury's home, which had been destroyed by fire coincident with his final disappearance. Having settled ourselves and carefully explained to our new landlady that we might be absent from

our room for many hours at a time, we proceeded to assemble those properties which would be necessary for us to take up a temporary residence among the Innsmouth people—for Phelan deemed it not only wise but mandatory that, in order to remain in Innsmouth comparatively free of observation, we must be made up to look as much like the Innsmouthers as possible.

In the late afternoon of that day, Phelan set to work. I discovered in a very short time that he was a consummate artist with his hands; my features began to change utterly—from a rather innocuous looking, and perhaps even weak appearing young fellow, I aged skillfully and began to assume the typical narrow head, flat nose, and curious ears so common to the Innsmouth people. He worked over my entire face; my mouth thickened, my skin became coarse-pored, my color vanished behind a gray pallor, horrible to contemplate; and he managed even to convey a bulging and batrachian expression about my eyes and to give my neck that oddly repellant appearance of having deep, almost scaly creases! I would not have known myself, after he had finished, but the operation took better than three hours, and at the end of that time it was as permanent as it could be expected to be.

"It is right," he decided after he had examined me, and then, tirelessly, without a word, he set about to give himself a similar appearance.

EARLY the next morning we left the house for Innsmouth, entraining for Newburyport, and thus coming into Innsmouth on the bus from the other side, a deliberate maneuver on Phelan's part. By noon of that day we were established, amid a few interested and curiously searching glances from the slovenly workers in the place, in the Gilman House, Innsmouth's lone open hotel—or rather, in what was left of it, for, like so many buildings in the town, it was in a very bad state of decay. We registered as Amos and John Wilken, cousins, for Phelan had discovered that Wilken was an old Innsmouth name not at present represented by any member of the family living in that accursed seaport city. The elderly clerk in the Gilman House had given us a few sharp-eyed glances, and his bulging eyes stared at the names on his register. "Related to old Jed Wilken, be ye?" he asked. My companion nodded briskly. "Man can see ye belong here," the clerk said, with an almost obscene chuckle. "Got business?"

"We're taking a little vacation," answered Phelan.

"Come to the right place, then, ye did. Things to be seen here, all right, *if ye're the right kind.*"

Again that distastefully suggestive chuckle.

Once alone in our room, Phelan became more tense than ever. "We have done well so far, but this is only the beginning. We have a good deal of work to do. I have no doubt the clerk will pass the word around that we are relataives of Jed Wilken; that will satisfy the first questions of the curious. Moreover, our appearance as 'tainted,' like the rest of the Innsmouthers, in the vicinity of those places where we might expect to encounter Ahab Marsh, will not excite undue comment—but I am convinced that we must avoid being seen too closely by Ahab himself."

"But what good will it do us to watch Ahab?" I countered. "If you are already reasonably certain that it is he . . ."

"There is more to be learned about Ahab than you think, Abel. Perhaps more than I think. We know the Marsh family, we know the line, Dr. Shrewsbury and I. But nowhere in that family tree can we find any trace of a Marsh named Ahab."

"Yet he is here."

"Yes, indeed. But how came he here?"

We went out soon after, having taken care to keep to old clothes, similar to those we had worn on our arrival, so that we might not give off an impression of undue affluence and so attract unwelcome attention. Phelan set out immediately for the vicinity of the waterfront, detouring only once to examine the Order of Dagon Hall at New Church Green, and ending up at last not far from the Marsh Refining Company. It was there, not long after our arrival, that I first had sight of our quarry.

Ahab Marsh was tall, though he walked in an odd, stooped manner; and his gait, too, was very strange, being not at all regu-

lar and rhythmic, but rather jerky, and even for the short distance from the refinery to the closely curtained car in which he rode, the fashion in which he made progress was very evident; his was a gait that might have been called *inhuman,* for it was not so much a walk as a kind of shuffling or lurching forward, and it was movement which had little counterpart even among the other Innsmouthers, for, whatever the changes in their aspects, their walk, shuffling as it was, was essentially human locomotion. As I have said, Ahab Marsh was taller than most of his fellow citizens, but his face was not much different from the features so common in Innsmouth, save in that it seemed somehow less coarse, and more greasy, as if the skin (for, despite its sometimes icthytic appearance, it *was* skin) were of a finer texture, this in turn suggesting that the Marsh breed was slightly superior to that of the average Innsmouther. It was impossible to see his eyes, for they were concealed by spectacles of a deep cobalt hue, and his mouth, while in many ways similar to that of the natives, was yet different in that it seemed to protrude more, doubtless because Ahab Marsh's chin receded almost into nothingness. He was, literally, a man without a chin, at sight of which I experienced a shudder of horror unlike any I had before undergone, for it gave him an appearance so frighteningly icthyic that I could not but be repelled by it. He seemed also to be earless, and wore his hat low on what appeared to be a head devoid of hair; his neck was scrawny and, though he was otherwise almost impeccably dressed, his hands were encased in black gloves, or rather, *mittens,* as I saw at second glance.

We were not observed. I had gazed at our quarry only in the most apparently casual manner, while Phelan did not look directly at him at all, but utilized a small pocket mirror to examine him even more indirectly. In a few moments Ahab Marsh had vanished into his car and driven away.

"A hot day for gloves," was all that Phelan said.

"I thought so."

"I fear it is as I suspected," Phelan added then, but this he would not explain. "We shall see."

We repaired to another section of the city to wander through Innsmouth's narrow, shaded streets and lanes, away from the region of the Manuxet River and the falls, close to which the Marsh Refinery rose on a little bluff. Phelan walked in deep and troubled contemplation; it was evident that he was in puzzled thought, which I did not interrupt. I marveled at the incredible state of arrested decay so prevalent in this old seaport town, and even more at the curious lack of activity; it was as if by far the majority of the inhabitants rested during the day, for very few of them were to be seen on the streets.

The night in Innsmouth, however, was destined to be different.

AS DARKNESS came, we made our way to the Order of Dagon Hall. At his one previous visit, Phelan had discovered that entrance to the hall for the ceremonies could be had only by display of a curious fish-like seal, and during the time I had tried to trace his movements here, he had fashioned several of them, of which the most perfect he had reserved for his own use, and that most closely resembling it he held for me, if I cared to use it, though he preferred that I take no such risk and remain outside the hall.

This, however, I was unwilling to do. It was patent that a great many people were coming to the hall, all evidently members of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon,* and I had the conviction that events I might not wish to miss might take place—this despite Phelan's insistent warning that we were placing ourselves in extreme danger by attending one of the forbidden ceremonies. Nothing daunted, I went doggedly along.

Fortunately, our seals were not challenged; I shudder to imagine what might have happened if they had been. I believe that more than anything else, our having the Innsmouth look, so skillfully fabricated, accounted for our easy passage into the hall. We were the focus of obvious attention, but it was plain that word of our identity as members of the Wilken clan had got around, for there was neither maleficence nor challenge in the eyes of men and women who looked on occasion in our direction. We took seats near the door, meaning to be off immediately if it seemed wise to

leave and, having settled ourselves, looked around the room. The hall was large and murky; its windows were shut off by black screens, apparently of tar-paper, so that it had the appearance of an old-fashioned theatre—that is, a hall converted to the showing of moving pictures when that great industry was in its infancy.

Moreover, there was a brooding dusk in the room that seemed to rise from the vicinity of a small dais up front. But it was not the murkiness of the hall that seized hold of my imagination—it was the ornaments.

For the hall was decorated with strange stone carvings of fishlike beings. I recognized several of them as very similar to certain primitive sculptures which had come out of Ponape, and certain others bore a disturbing resemblance to inexplicable carvings found on Easter Island, as well as in the Mayan ruins of Central America, and the Inca remains of Peru. Even in this murky light it was clearly to be seen that these sculptures and carvings were not done by Innsmouth hands, but that they were evidently from some foreign port; indeed, they might well have come from Ponape, since the Marsh boats crossed the seas as far as the most distant corners of civilization. Only a very dim artificial light burned, at the foot of the stage; nothing else helped to illumine the hall, yet it seemed to me that the sculptures and bas-reliefs had a hellish suggestiveness that was soul-stirring and frightening, an out-of-this-world look which was profoundly agitating—for it spoke of time long gone by, of great ages before our time, ages when the world and perhaps the universe were young. Apart from these, and from a miniature of what must have been a vast, amorphous octopus-like creature, which occupied the center of the dais, the hall was bare of everything in the way of decorations—nothing but rickety chairs, a plain table on the dais, and those tightly curtained windows to offset the effect of those alien bas-reliefs and sculptures, and this lack of everything only served to heighten their hideousness.

I glanced at my companion but found him gazing expressionlessly straight before him. If he had examined the bas-reliefs and sculptures, he had done so less openly. I felt that it would not be wise any longer to stare at those oddly disturbing ornaments; so I followed Phelan's example. It was still possible, however, to notice that the hall was rapidly filling up with more people than the events of the day would have persuaded me to believe still lived in the city. There were close to four hundred seats, and soon all were filled. When it became evident that there were still others to be seated, Phelan left his seat and stood up against the wall near the entrance. I did likewise, so that a pair of decrepit oldsters, hideously changed in appearance from the younger element—for the creases at their necks had grown more scaley, and were deeper, and their eyes bulged glassily—could sit down. Our relinquishment of our seats passed unnoticed, for a few others were already standing along the walls.

It must have been close to halfpast nine—for the summer evening was long, and darkness did not fall early—before anything took place. Then suddenly there appeared through a rear entrance a middle-aged man clad in strangely decorated vestments; at first glance his appearance was priestly, but it was soon manifest that his vestments were blasphemously decorated, with the same batrachian and fishlike representations which in plaque and sculpture ornamented the hall. He came to the image on the dais, touched it reverently with his hands, and began to speak—not Latin or Greek, as I had at first supposed he might speak, but an odd, garbled language of which I could not understand a word, a horribly suggestive series of mouthings which immediately started a kind of low, almost lyrical humming response from the audience.

At this point Phelan touched my arm, and slipped away out the entrance. I was meant to follow, and did so, despite my reluctance to leave the ceremonies just as they were beginning.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Ahab Marsh is not there."

"He may still come."

Phelan shook his head. "I think not. We must look for him elsewhere."

HE WALKED with such purpose that I assumed, correctly, as it turned out, that he knew or suspected where he might

find Ahab Marsh. I had thought that Phelan would go directly to the old Marsh home on Washington Street, but he did not; my second guess was that he would lead the way back to the Refinery, and in this I was certain that I was correct, until we reached the Refinery, crossed the bridge over the Manuxet nearby, and went on to strike out along the seashore beyond the harbor at the mouth of the river. The night was dark, save for a waning, late-rising moon, pushing up out of the eastern horizon, and making its glade yellowly on the water, if feebly; stars shone above, a bank of dark clouds lay low along the southern rim of heaven, a light east wind blew.

"Do you know where you're going, Phelan?" I asked finally.

"Yes."

We were following a little-used road which had been marked "Private," and which led crazily along the coast there, over stones and sand, rocks and ruts. In one place Phelan dropped to his knees and lightly touched the sandy ruts.

"This road has been recently used."

The sand was freshly disturbed, unlike the caked sand all around. "By Ahab?" I asked.

He nodded thoughtfully. "There is a little cove just ahead. This is Marsh land—old Obed bought it more than a century ago."

We hastened on, though we instinctively walked with more caution.

On the shore of the sheltered cove we found the curtained car in which Ahab Marsh had that day left the Refinery. Unafraid, perhaps because of what he knew he would find there, my companion went directly up to it. There was no one in the car, but on the back seat, thrown carelessly down, were clothes—a man's clothes—and even in the dark I recognized the suit Ahab Marsh had worn that day.

But Phelan closed the car door and hurried around to the other side, past the car down to the sea's edge, where he dropped to his knees once more and looked down. The shoes were there, I saw when I knelt at my companion's side. The socks, too—thick, woollen socks, though the day had been very warm. And the shape of the shoes in that wan moonlight was strangely upsetting—how wide they were. How curiously shaped!—at one time surely, normal shoes, if a little large, but now plainly *worn* out of shape, as if the foot inside had been—well, as if a kind of distorting disease had afflicted the wearer's feet.

And there was something else, something all the more hideously frightening in that yellow moonlight, with the sea's sound and that other sound—the sound to which Phelan cautioned me to listen; a kind of distant ululation, non-human in origin, coming not from the land at all, but from the sea, far far out, the sea—and Devil Reef, haunted in the channels of my memory by everything I had heard from that storekeeper and later on from my companion, the stories of strange, evil, unholy traffic between sea-creatures and the people of Innsmouth, the things Obed Marsh had found on Ponape and that other island, the terror of the late nineteen-twenties with the strange disappearances of young people, human sacrifices put to sea and never returned! It rose in the east and came in on the wind, a ghastly chanting that sounded like something from another world, a liquid ululation, a watery sound defying description, but evil beyond any experience of man. And it rode the wind into my horrified consciousness while my eyes were fixed still to that terrible evidence so plain on the sandy beach between the place where Ahab Marsh's shoes and socks were, and where the water began—*the footprints, not of human feet, but of pedal extremities that were squat, with elongated digits, thick, wide, and webbed!*

IV

OF THE events that came after, I hesitate to write, and yet from the moment Andrew Phelan knew, there was no need for further delay. It was Ahab Marsh who was the object of his search—and only to a considerably lesser degree the worshipers in the Order of Dagon Hall. The sacrifices, he said, had been going on again, with greater secrecy, just as in Obed Marsh's day. Ever since the debacle of 1928-1929, the Innsmouthers had been more careful, those who had been left, and those who had filtered back into the town after the Fed-

erals had gone. And Ahab—Ahab who had shed his clothing and gone into the sea only to turn up the next day, as if nothing untoward had taken place—could anyone doubt but that he had swum out to Devil Reef? And could anyone doubt what had happened to the young Innsmouth man who had driven his car that night? For that was the way of sacrifice—the chosen of Ahab, to work for Ahab and be prepared, unknowing, for the sacrifice of those hellish creatures which rose from the depths of Y'hanthlei beyond the shunned and feared Devil Reef which in low tide stood black and evilly above the dark waters of the Atlantic.

For Ahab Marsh was back next day, back at the Refinery, with another young man to drive his car around, and take him for those short distances from the immense old Marsh home on tree-shrouded Washington Street to the Refinery building near the falls of the Manuxet. But all night long from our room in the Gilman House we listened. It was not only the sounds from the sea, borne by the east wind, that we heard—there were other things beside that ghastly ululation. There were the terrible screams, the hoarse, animal-like screams of a man in mortal terror; there was that frightful chant which came simultaneously from the assembled members of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*, gathered together in that hall with its horrible sculptures and bas-reliefs and that grotesque and bestial miniature of a creature evil beyond the concept of man, that horrible mouthing which made its impact weirdly on the night air—*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*—ever repeated, a ritual phrase which Phelan translated in his hushed voice as "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming!"

In the morning my companion went out only long enough to assure himself that Ahab Marsh had returned; then he came back to the hotel and lost himself in study, leaving me to my own devices for the remainder of that day, and abjuring me only to refrain from making myself in any way conspicuous. I had already resolved to do nothing to attract attention, but nevertheless I was determined to follow up the hints of terrible human sacrifices and horrible rites performed by certain of the Innsmouth people, which Andrew Phelan had given me; and, accordingly, I made my way back to the First National store, and Mr. Hendreson.

The storekeeper did not recognize me, which was a tribute to Phelan's skill. He adopted toward me that same servile attitude which he had used to the Waite woman who had entered his store when I was last in it, and when we were alone—for someone else was in the store at my entrance—and I attempted to identify myself, it was almost impossible to do so. Plainly, Hendreson thought at first that one of the Innsmouth people had somehow learned of our previous conversation, and it was only when I repeated to him many of the things he had said that he acknowledged me for whom I was. But he was fearful still.

"If *they* find out!" he exclaimed in a harsh, ominous whisper.

I assured him no one knew of my real identity and none would, save of course Hendreson, whom I felt certain could be trusted. He guessed that I had been "looking into things," as he put it, and with considerable agitation again urged me to take myself off.

"Some of them seem to be able to *smell* people who don't like them. I don't know how they do it—as if they read a man's mind or his heart. And if they catch you like this—why, why . . ."

"Why what, Mr. Hendreson?"

"You'll never get back where you came from."

I ASSURED him with a self-confidence I was far from feeling that I had no intention of getting caught. I had come to him now for more information; despite the violent shaking of his head, I would not take his negative answer; perhaps he knew nothing, yet I must ask. Had there been any disappearances—particularly of young men and women—from Innsmouth in the years he had been here?

He nodded furtively.

"Many?"

"Maybe twenty or so. When the Order meets—they don't meet often; it usually comes out after that. On the nights the Order meets, somebody just isn't heard from again. *They* say they've run away. First

few times I heard it, I didn't find that hard to believe; I could understand why they'd want to run away from Innsmouth." But then—there were those other things—the people who disappeared usually always worked for Ahab Marsh, and there were those old stories about Obed Marsh—how he carried people out to Devil Reef and came back alone. Zadok Allen had talked about it; they said *Zadok* was crazy, but Zadok said things, and there was certain clinching evidence to support what the crazed old man said. He talked like that, and he had spells, Hendreson said, until he —*died*. By the way he said it, I gathered that Zadok Allen had not just died.

"You mean until they killed him," I countered.

"I didn't say so; I'm not the one to say anything. Mind you, I never *saw* a thing —anyway, nothing you could make something of. I never *saw* anyone disappear; I just didn't see them any more, that's all. Later on, I heard about it—somebody dropped a word about it here and there, and I picked it up. Nothing ever got into the paper; nothing ever was said so it could; no one ever made any search or any attempt to get trace of the missing ones. I couldn't help thinking about the stories old Zadok Allen and those others whispered about Captain Obed Marsh. Mighta be it's all in my mind. It would affect a man's mind to live in a place like this for as many years as I've been here; it would affect some men in just as many months. I'm not the one to say old Zadok Allen was crazy. All I say is that I don't think he was, and he never talked much until he had a little something to drink; that loosened his tongue, and usually next time he was sober he seemed to be mighty sorry he said anything, walking along and looking over his shoulder all the time even in broad daylight, and always a-looking out toward the sea, out to where you can just see the line of Devil Reef when the tide is low and the day is clear. The Innsmouthers don't look out there much, but sometimes when there's meeting at the Order of Dagon Hall, there are lights out there, strange lights, and there are lights from the cupola of the old Gilman House, just flashing back and forth —as if it was talk going on between 'em."

"You've seen those lights yourself?"

"It's the only thing I've seen. Might be a boat, but I don't think so. Not out there at Devil Reef.

"Have you ever been out there?"

He shook his head. "No, sir. Don't have any wish to go. I got close to it one time in a launch—ugly gray stone, with some mighty strange shapes to it—and I didn't want to get any closer. It was just like something driving you away, like a big hand reaching out invisible and pushing you back—that's the way it was. Made my skin crawl and my hair tingle along the back of my neck. I never forgot it—and that was before I heard much; so I never put it down to what was suggested or hinted at and something getting to work on my nerves or my imagination."

"Ahab Marsh is the power here in Innsmouth then?"

"That he is. That's because there's not a Waite or a Gilman or an Orne left, not a man, that is, just the women, and they're growing old. The men all vanished about the time the Federals came in here."

I TURNED him back to the subject of those mysterious disappearances. It seemed incredible that young men and women could simply drop out of existence in this day and age, and never a word of it printed anywhere. Oh, responded Hendreson, I didn't know Innsmouth if I thought that was impossible. They were close-mouthed, close as clams, and if they figured it was something they had to do for their pagan god or whatever it was they worshiped, they never complained, they just took it and made the best of it, and they were all mortally afraid of Ahab Marsh. He came close to me, so close that I was aware of his quickened pulse.

"I touched him once, just once, and that once was enough! God! He was cold, cold as ice, and where I touched him, between the end of his glove and his coat-sleeve—he drew back right away and gave me a look—the skin was moist-cold, like a fish!" He shuddered at the memory of it, touched a handkerchief to his temples, and broke away.

"Aren't they all like that?"

"No, they're not. The others are differ-

ent. They say the Marshes were all cold-blooded, especially since Captain Obed's time, but I've heard different. You take that fellow—Williamson, I think his name was—who brought the Federals here. They didn't know it at that time, but he was a Marsh—he had Orne blood in him, too, and when *they* found it out, they just waited for him to come back. And he did come. He came back, they said, and he went right down to the water, a-singing, they said, and he took off his clothes and he dove in and began swimming out toward that reef, and never a word of him since. Mind you, I didn't see it myself; it's just what I heard, though it took place in my own time. Those with Marsh blood in 'em always come back, no matter how far away they are. Look at Ahab Marsh—come from God knows where."

Once started, Hendreson proved to be unusually loquacious, despite his fears. Doubtless the long periods of abstinence in his conversation with outsiders had something to do with it, as well as the security his shop afforded him, for it was not often visited in the morning hours; the Innsmouth people preferred to shop in late afternoon, and he was often obliged to keep his store open beyond the usual six o'clock closing hour. He talked of the strange jewelry worn by the Innsmouthers—those grotesque and repulsive armlets and tiaras, the rings and pectorals, with repellent figures cut in high relief on them all. I could not doubt that they were the same as those figures of the bas-reliefs and sculptures in the Order of Dagon Hall; Hendreson had seen pieces on occasion; those who belonged to the Order wore them, and certain of the debased churches had them, too. He spoke about the sounds from the sea—"a kind of singing, and it's no human voice does it."

"What is it?"

"I don't know. No inclination to find out, either. It wouldn't be healthy. It comes from somewhere out there—like last night." His voice dropped to a whisper.

"I know what you mean."

HE HINTED at the other sounds; though he did not once mention the hoarse, terrified screams, he had nonetheless heard them. And there were other things, he muttered darkly, things far more terrible, things that went back to old Obed Marsh and still lived in the waters beyond Devil Reef. There was that suppressed talk about Obed himself—how he was not really dead, how a party of boating people from Newburyport way who knew the Marsh family came into port one day all pale and shaking and said they had seen Obed out there, swimming like a porpoise, and if it was not Obed Marsh, then what was it in his likeness? What was it the Newburyporters had seen? No plain fish would scare men and women like that! And why did the Innsmouthers try so hard to keep it quiet? They shut up the Newburyport people, all right—probably because they were strangers and they didn't really want to believe what it was they saw out there near Devil Reef. But there *were* things swimming out there, others had seen them, things that dove and disappeared and never came up again, though they looked like men and women, except that they were sometimes scaley and with odd, wrinkled, and shiny skin. And what happened to so many of the old folks? There never seemed to be funerals, nor buryings—but certain of them got queerer-looking every year, and then one fine day went down to the sea and first thing people knew they were reported "lost at sea" or "drowned" or something like that. It was true, the things swimming in the sea were not often seen by day—but at night! And what was it, what manner of creature was it that came climbing out of the sea on to Devil Reef? And why did certain of the Innsmouthers go out there in the night? He seemed to grow more and more excited as he talked, though his voice grew more hushed, and it was readily patent that he had brooded a great deal about everything he had heard since he came to Innsmouth, and was held to it by a fascination over which he had no control, a fascination which existed side by side with an utter and almost morbid loathing.

It was almost noon when I made my way back to the Gilman House.

My companion had finished his study, and he now listened to what I had to say with the utmost gravity, though I could detect nothing in his attitude to reveal that he had not previously been aware of what Hendre-

son had said and hinted. After I finished, he said nothing, only nodded, and went on to explain our coming movements. Our period of stay in Innsmouth was almost over, he said; we would leave the city just as soon as we had dealt with Ahab Marsh, and that might be tonight, it might be tomorrow night, but it would be soon, for all was in readiness. Meanwhile, however, there were certain aspects of this strange pursuit of which I must know, and chief among them was the danger to myself.

"I am not afraid," I hastened to say.

"No, perhaps not in the physical sense. But it is impossible to say what they might do to you. All of us carry a talisman which is potent against the Deep Ones and the minions of the Old Ones, but not against the Old Ones themselves, or their immediate servitors, who also come to the surface of earth on special missions to destroy such of us as learn the secrets and oppose the coming again of great Cthulhu, and those others."

So saying, he placed before me a small, five-pointed star made of a stone material foreign to me. A gray stone—and instantly I remembered reading of it in the Library at Miskatonic University—the "five-pointed star carven of gray stone from ancient Mnar!" which had the power of the Ancient Ones in its magic. I took it wordlessly and put it into my pocket, as Phelan indicated I should.

He went on.

This might afford me partial terrestrial protection, but there was a way of further escape if danger from the immediate servitors of Cthulhu menaced. I, too, might come to Celaeno, if I wished, though the way was terrible, and it would be required of me that I enlist the aid of creatures who, while in opposition to the Deep Ones and all others who served Great Cthulhu, were themselves essentially evil, for they served Hastur the Unspeakable, laired in the black Lake of Hali in the Hyades. In order that these creatures be made to serve me, however, it would be necessary for me to swallow a small pellet, a distillation of that marvelous golden mead of Professor Shrewsbury's, the mead which rendered the drinker insensible to the effects of time and space, and enabled him to travel in those dimensions, while at the same time heightening his sensory perceptions; then to blow upon a strange stone whistle, and also to call forth into space certain words: *"Iä! Iä! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!"* Certain flying creatures—the Byakhee—would come out of space, and I was to mount and take flight unafraid. But only if danger pressed close—for the danger of the Deep Ones and all who are allied to them, insisted Phelan, is as great to the soul as to the body.

To all this I listened in amazement not untouched by a kind of spiritual terror—that terror so common to men who, for the first time look out into the void of greater space, who begin to contemplate seriously for the initial time the vastness of the outer universes—a terror induced by the instinctive knowledge that it was by this means of travel that Andrew Phelan had reached my room in Boston, and it was by this means that he had originally gone forth more than a year ago!

So saying, Phelan gave into my hands the little golden pellets, three of them, in case I should lose one, and also a tiny whistle, which he warned me never to blow upon save in the dire need he had outlined, unless I were prepared for fateful consequences. This much, he said, he could do for my protection, and he made it plain that we would not be returning to Arkham together, though we might set out for that town in each other's company.

"They will expect us to go back to Newburyport," he said. "So we will follow the railroad tracks toward Arkham. That is shorter, in any case, and by the time they may be ready to pursue, we should be well out of their way. Immediately our work is done, we will make for the railroad; we will wait long enough to be sure that our work here is accomplished." He paused significantly and then added that pursuit from Innsmouth by the people themselves we need not fear.

"What other then?"

"When that other comes, you will know without prior explanation," he answered ominously.

BY NIGHTFALL, we were prepared. I did not as yet fully know Andrew Phe-

lan's plan, but I knew that the first step necessary would be to empty the Washington Street house of the Marshes of the two women who were there. To this end Phelan sent them a prosaic note saying that an elderly relative had arrived to put up at the Gilman House, and, being in ill health and unable to call, would enjoy a visit that evening at nine o'clock from the Misses Aliza and Ethlai Marsh." It was a commonplace letter, correct in every detail, save that my companion embellished it with a reproduction of that seal of Dagon, and again impressed the seal in wax upon the flap of the envelope. He had signed the name of Wilken, knowing that there had years ago been marriage between the Marshes and the Wilkens, and he felt certain that this letter would take the Marsh women from the house for the length of time required for what must be done to destroy the leadership of the minions of Cthuhu at Innsmouth and so retard whatever progress had been made in preparing the way for the rising again, the coming from his house of that dread being dreaming deep in the waters under the earth.

He dispatched this letter near suppertime, and instructed the desk clerk that if anyone should telephone, he would be back directly. Then he went out, Phelan carrying a little valise into which he had put some of the tihngs he had brought with him in the pockets of that robe he had worn on his arrival.

The night was overcast, which my companion was pleased to see, for at nine there would otherwise still have been some twilight; now, however, at that hour, the night would be dark enough for our purpose. If all went as he hoped, the Marsh women would travel to the Gilman House by car, driven by the new man; that would leave Ahab alone in that old mansion. Phelan explained that he had no qualms; if the women did not respond to that message, they too would be destroyed, much as he disliked the thought of proceeding against them in the same fashion as against Ahab. We had no difficulty in finding a place of adequate concealment from which we could watch the Washington Street house, for the street was heavily grown with trees, thus affording shadows and dark corners. The house across the way was shrouded in darkness, save for a tiny light that gleamed in a room on the second floor, but just before nine o'clock, a light went up downstairs.

"They're coming," whispered my companion.

He was right, for in a few minutes that black, curtained car rolled around to the front entrance, and the two Marsh women, heavily veiled, came from the house and, entering the car, drove away.

Phelan lost not an instant. He crossed the street into the dark grounds of the Marsh estate, and there at once opened his valise, which contained scores of the five-pointed stars, all very small. These, he said, were to be used to circle the house, particularly in the vicinity of the doors and windows; we must work silently and swiftly, for if these talismans were not laid down, Ahab might escape. But he could not cross these stones, he could not pass by them in any way. I hastened to do Phelan's bidding, and soon met him coming around the other way. The darkness was urgent with foreboding; at any moment the Marsh women might come back; at any second Ahab Marsh might become aware of someone in the grounds, though we made no sound.

"It will soon be over," said Phelan then. "Whatever happens, be still — do not be alarmed."

He then disappeared once again around to the back of the house. He was gone but a few minutes before he returned to where I stood in the shadow of a bush near the front entrance. But he did not pause; he went on up to the front door and there busied himself for a few moments. When he stepped away, I saw a thin flame growing at one corner of the door—he had fired the house!

He joined me, looking grimly and emotionlessly toward that single window where light burned. "Only fire will destroy them," he said. "You might remember that, Abel. You may encounter them again."

"We'd better get away."

"Wait. We must make sure of Ahab."

The fire ate rapidly at the old wood, and already at the rear of the house the flames lit up the close-pressing trees. At any moment someone might see, someone might

give the alarm which would summon the rickety old Innsmouth fire department vehicles; but in this we were fortunate, for the Innsmouthers generally shunned the places where Ahab Marsh lived and worked, fearing and respecting the Marshes, even as their ancestors had feared and respected those earlier members of that accursed family who had trafficked with beings out of the sea and so had brought into this seaport town a blight of horrible miscegnation which had left its mark upon all their progeny.

Suddenly the window of that lit room was thrown open, and Ahab leaned out. He was there for but an instant; then he withdrew, not troubling to shut the window, and thus creating an effective draft for the flames from below.

"Now!" whispered Andrew Phelan urgently.

THE front door was torn open, and Ahab Marsh bounded out past the flames in one great leap But he went no farther; he came down, took one step, and then recoiled, his arm upflung, and a horrible, guttural cry welled from his thick lips. Behind him the flames mounted and spread, aided by the draft through the open door; already the heat must have been awful where he stood—for what happened then is seared upon my consciousness for all time.

The clothes worn by Ahab Marsh began to fall from him in flames as he stood there —first those curious mittens on his hands, then the black skull-cap, and the clothes about his body—and this so swiftly that he seemed literally to burst from his clothes! What stood there then was not human, it was not a man, it was a hellish batrachian and icthyic travesty of a man, whose hands were frog-like and webbed, great pads instead of hands, whose body was scaled and tentacled and gleamed with the moisture so natural to its coldness—a body which had been bound into the unnatural clothing of a human being, but which, now that that clothing had fallen away, and the tight linens binding it to fit into that clothing as well, resembled a thing out of an unknown, dark corner of earth's forbidden places—a terrible, ghastly thing that walked in the guise of a man, but had gills beneath the wax ears which melted off in the heat of that destructive fire where that creature slowly backed into the flames, rather than dare the power of those stones laid end to end around the house, whimpering and crying bestially, in a kind of ululation I had heard before!

Small wonder Ahab Marsh had been able to swim from shore out to Devil Reef! Small wonder he had carried sacrifices to the waiting hosts out there in the depths! For the creature in the guise and identity of Ahab Marsh was not a Marsh at all, he was not a human being; *the thing that called itself Ahab Marsh, the thing the Innsmouth people so blindly followed was one of the Deep Ones himself, come from the sunken city of Y'ha-nthlei to resume again the work once begun by the terrible Obed Marsh at the behest and bidding of the minions of Great Cthulhu!*

As in a dream I felt Andrew Phelan's touch upon my arm; I turned and followed him into the shadowed street, down which even now came that curtained car carrying the Marsh women back to that unhallowed house. We fled, skulking in the shadows. There was no need to return to the Gilman House, for we had left money in our room to pay for our lodgings, and nothing of importance in personal belongings had been left there. We went directly toward the railroad tracks and made our way out of that justly shunned city.

A mile beyond the town we turned and looked back. The redness of the sky in that place told us what was happening; the fire in that ancient tinder house had spread to neighboring houses. But something of even more portentous significance took place, for silently my companion pointed seaward, and there, far out on the rim of the sky, I saw strange, green flashes of light and, looking swiftly back toward Innsmouth, I saw other lights flashing from a high place which could have been none other than the cupola of the Gilman House.

Then Andrew Phelan took my hand. "Good-by, Abel. I am going to leave you here. You will remember everything I have said."

"But they will find you!" I cried.

He shook his head. "Do you go on along the tracks; lose no time. I will be all right."

I did as I was bidden, knowing that every moment's delay was potentially fatal.

I could not have gone far when I heard that strange, unearthly whistling sound, and shortly thereafter the voice of Andrew Phelan shouting triumphantly into space—*"Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!"*

Involuntarily I turned.

There, silhouetted against the red-hued sky over Innsmouth, I saw a great flying thing, a great bat-like bird that came swooping down and was lost briefly in the darkness—the Byakhee. Then it rose up again, and it was not alone—something more was there between its great wings where it mounted swiftly out of sight.

Daring danger, I ran back.

Of Andrew Phelan there was no sign.

V

IT IS now almost a fortnight since the events of that week.

The divinity school has known me no more; I have been haunting the Library of Miskatonic University, and I have learned more—much more—about things Andrew Phelan would not tell me, and I understand better now what it was that went on in accursed Innsmouth, things that are going on in other remote corners of this earth, which is always and forever a great battleground for the forces of good and those of evil.

Two nights ago for the first time I saw that I was being followed. Perhaps I was wrong in tearing from my face all those disfiguring things Andrew Phelan had put there to give me "the Innsmouth look," and leaving them lie along the little-used tracks in the direction of Arkham, where they might be found. Perhaps it was not the Innsmouth people who found them—but something other, something that came out of the sea that night in response to those signals from the cupola of the Gilman House.

Yet my follower of two nights ago was an Innsmouth man, surely; his oddly batrachian appearance was unmistakable. Of him, however, I had no fear; I had the five-pointed star-stone in my pocket; I felt safe.

But last night came the other!

Last night I heard the earth move *under* me! I heard the sound of great, sluggish, sucking footsteps slogging along in the waters of the earth, and I knew what Andrew Phelan meant when he said that I would know when that other pursuer came! I know!

I have made haste to put this down, and I will send it to the Library of Miskatonic University, to be put with Dr. Shrewsbury's papers and what they call the "Phelan Manuscript," written by Andrew Phelan before he went to Celaeno for the first time. It is late, and I have the conviction that I am not alone; there is an unnatural hush about the entire city, and I can hear those horrible sucking sounds from far beneath. In the east, the Pleiades and Celaeno have begun to rise above the horizon. I have taken the little golden pellet made from Dr. Shrewsbury's mead, I have the whistle here beside me, I remember the words, and if the heightening of awareness that is certain to follow the taking of the mead discloses something of what it is that dogs me now, I shall know what to do.

Even now I am becoming aware of changes within me. It is as if the walls of the house fell away, as if the street too, were gone, and a fog—something in that watery fog, like a giant frog with tentacles—like a—

Great God! What horror!

Iä! Iä! Hastur! . . .

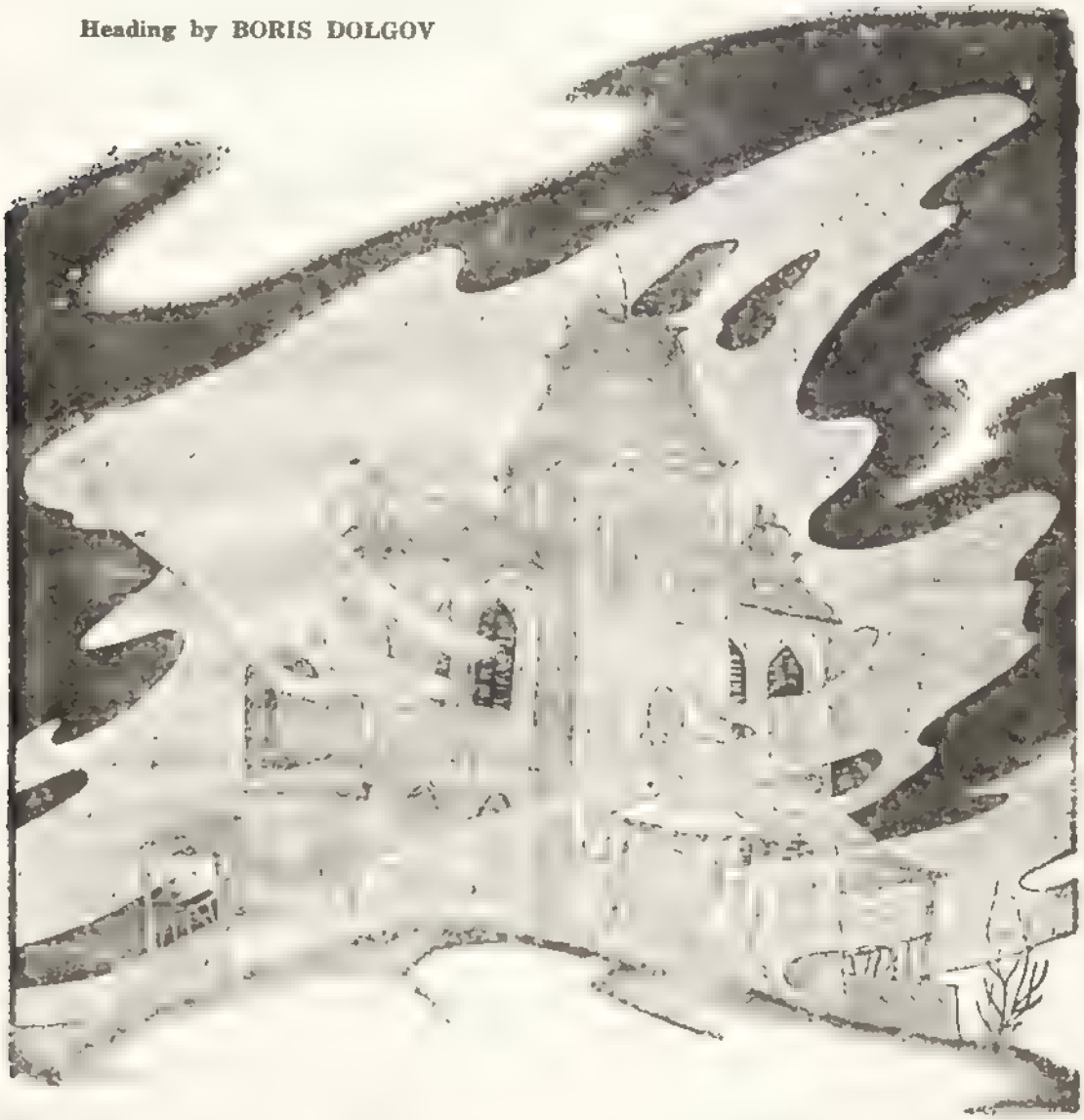
Fog Country

By ALLISON V. HARDING

I AM the town recorder here at Elbow Creek. With all that this job is concerned with facts and figures of our community, the assessments and public debts, the levies and rates, the births and deaths, I am not too busy but that I have time to myself. Time to think.

Elbow Creek—named after the shallow, sickly little stream that bends abruptly through our middle and thence to the Sound

Heading by BORIS DOLGOV



You'll swear the fog is alive with a wet sticky gurgling life of its own!

—is thinly populated. People are born here, to be sure. Some of them live their lives here if they aren't able to move away. And people die here . . . or disappear!

If you come our way, taking macadam 14 off the main highway, you'll notice Elbow Creek. It forces itself upon you as though you'd crossed an invisible line in some forsaken land. That little white clapboard town hall is where I work. I'm known as Smith. Just Smith. Driving through you might stop at the peak of the hill up where the big house is and look at the silver of the creek running away from you with the blueness of the Sound peeking over the toppermost of the trees way out beyond us.

It's a pretty view all right, but people don't settle here, oh, a few times maybe, but they move away quick. There's a blight on this place. Fear's a blight, isn't it? It has to do with a lot of things, but I guess you can go back to the Hobells.

The family, as represented mainly by grandfather and his brothers, came riproaring in here decades ago. It was a wild unpopulated country then, and I guess they liked that view down to the coast just the way the tourists do now. Only they didn't shudder when evening came and move on. The Hobells are tough and evil. They took most of the land hereabouts, especially the big hill. They built the huge house on top there. They even tried to call the town after themselves, but the state said it stayed Elbow Creek and the Hobells didn't care too much. They had just about all the land.

A strange crew, these big men and their wild-eyed woman-folk. Descendants, undoubtedly, of the buccaneers that plundered the coast and of the outlaws and guerrillas who pillaged this section of the country in its early history. Strong, cruel, ruthless men who, with no new lands to conquer, turned to debauches and fighting among themselves. The house on the hill in Elbow Creek became famous through the years as a place to avoid, and each new generation of Hobell men wrote new pages of violence in the evolution of the little town.

The other folks hereabouts, too weak to fight the Hobells, too poor to move away, simply tolerated the raids on their chicken coops, the thefts in the night, and the beatings perpetrated on any of their number unlucky enough to get in the way of a Hobell.

But there are forces here at Elbow Creek that are eviler than the Hobells and far more powerful. Forces beyond our understanding, and yet all who live here know of them with an inarticulate realization that brings fear deep to the very soul of a man. I remember not such a great many years ago, Jess Hobell, oldest brother and leader of the present generation of the family, lost his huge mastiff. Peculiar it was, too. Jess came to town the next day and marched through the streets accosting everybody he met, accusing them of taking the animal and knocking them down if they didn't make a satisfactory retort.

THE night Jess's dog disappeared—and how could he, the eldest Hobell wanted to know, chained up tight to a post back of the house no dog could have pulled loose from—we had one of those fogs.

You don't know what that means unless you've been here. It's not like anything you've ever experienced or anything you ever will again, except here. The damp gray spongy clouds come rolling in from the Sound, following Elbow Creek like a marker and sitting down on the hill and around it. Damp, thick substance that you can almost feel in your hands and on your face. And the chill that goes through you isn't from the temperature because you'll swear the fog around you makes noises and is alive with a wet, sticky gurgling life that puts terror in the pit of your stomach.

Like I say, Jess's dog was outside when the fog came that night. He barked and growled and muttered a bit as always, and then later he was gone. Just like that. Maybe similar things had happened here, somebody's calf-baby or one of the poor folks youngsters—just disappeared! You don't pay much attention to those stories, though.

There was a very old man down in the village who told Jess when he came cursing and roaring the day after the fog, told him the place was evil, and especially the hill where the Hobells lived. The old man wouldn't shut up and turn aside the way the rest of us did when any of the family came amongst us. He told Jess to take his people and leave the hill. They whisper that Jess hit him, and we buried the aged fellow

two days later, but nobody saw the blow, nobody would say anything, and he *was* very old. The carrying-on up at the place on the hill went on, the fighting and drinking and cursing.

It seems that young Tom Hobell, the only one of the brothers who ever had much learning, the youngest and the least bad of the brood, wanted to get out, or so the villagers whispered. There was a girl in the valley he'd met once. He wanted to marry her and leave, but Jess was the strong man of the family and with the other brothers and sisters, persuaded Tom to bring his wife up to Hill House to live. I can see the girl so very well. She's just a figure here in my records under "Deaths" and even that was several years ago, but I can see her as she was, with her black hair and wide frightened eyes, but loving Tom so she went up to that hell-place.

The fights got worse, and one night Tom's wife was killed trying to beat off one of the other carousing brothers. They say Tom always suspected it was Jess, and maybe that's the truth. She was buried in the little cemetery on the slope just below town. Only Tom came to the ceremony, and I guess everybody noticed the way his face and hands were working and they knew there'd be trouble. The records here say "Accidental Death." That was before I, Smith, took over as clerk, but I know that's wrong and so does everyone else. Her death was no accident.

TWO nights later I think, some of the braver of villagers stole up the hill a ways. Most of the folks were sorry for Tom and they knew something was going to break up there. Tom was strong and tough but not more so than Jess, and there were the others against him. After a while Jess and Tom came out of the house, the elder of the two swearing and cursing. They came down the hill to an open space that cut a little dent out of the side of the slope, and they fought.

As they battled and the drinking and carrying on continued unabated up at the house, the moon went under and the fog started to come. Then the villagers, feeling the stealthy Sound dampness on the backs of their necks, crept away and hurried to their homes, barring their doors and windows. Maybe one or two were brave enough to stay, I don't know, but the story tells of the blanket of slimy wetness that crept over Elbow Creek, crept over the land up the hill and settled down around the house.

And all the while Tom and Jess went on fighting, battering each other with their huge hard hands. When you're mad enough and fighting furiously enough, you don't notice anything. The men probably were aware of the fog but little, and certainly they weren't listening, so when the sounds from the house suddenly stopped as though muffled in a wet blanket, it was a time before anybody noticed—

The fog went away very quickly that night and the moon was out again. The village folk climbed back up the hill to find out what had happened. Jess and Tom were lying exhausted within a few yards of each other. The young one's face was battered and smashed beyond recognition and Jess himself wasn't a pretty sight.

But the crowning horror of the night came when the village people looked up toward Hill House. The mansion stood in the moonlight shockingly shriveled and deformed, its board sides wrinkled as though with age, its frame dislocated. No one went any nearer. The silence was too awful.

Finally Jess staggered to his feet and went up the hill. Everybody knows that what he found in the misshapen hulk of his house was nothing. Just nothing. Two brothers and two sisters gone. Glasses and bottles and furniture overturned and smashed and a wet, reeking slime coating the woodwork, floors, and ceiling. But nothing else. You could hear Jess yelling then, his deep hoarse voice reverberating through the empty house, and there was something indescribably terrible about it. He called them by name, each of his brothers and sisters, and the people watching downhill looked at each other and back at the house.

The first streaks of dawn were showing off to the east. Sometime before the villagers left, Tom had reeled off, holding his hands to his smashed face. The story goes that Tom went as far away from Elbow Creek as he could. The people in the village knew he'd never be seen around here again.

And Jess? Jess went to work repairing the

mansion. He got a couple of fierce dogs and he took to muttering to himself and the wild-eyed look grew more pronounced. But he didn't leave. He was bound to go on living there. He had extra lights put in the place, and you could see Hill House, a beacon blob of lights up there, shining all night, as though that would help!

All of the villagers knew that some time, some day, the same fate that oozed in from the Sound and lisped and slopped its way up the hill, gently, gently, would come back for Jess living there on the hill where nobody was supposed to live, and he was a Hobell. And even though the Hobells were evil, there were other things that were immeasurably more evil.

Time passed, and what fog came to Elbow Creek was small, wispy, harmless. But I always had a feeling that something was gathering out there in the blue night of the Sound, gathering its bigness and deadliness until the right time. I used to sit in my tiny ramshackle room near the Town Hall evening and look out the window at the darkening sky. I'd think of Jess up there on the hill with his two dogs and all his lights that he faithfully put on at dusk. I'd wonder about him and I'd wonder about the Fog.

THEN one evening on the walk down the main street to my room I felt mist on my face, heavy and sticky. The proprietor of the small inn where I ate my meal remarked laconically, "Looks like one of the big fogs." I already had a hard knot of anticipation inside of me.

It grew dark very quickly, and when I left my room around nine o'clock, I noticed the streets were virtually empty and those persons still abroad hurried past me as though they wished to be through their business and home safely at the earliest possible moment.

I trudged out of town along the road that led past the foot of the hill where the Hobell house was. I had a waterproof flashlight in each pocket and a long hunting knife sheathed at my hip. I used one of my torches as I walked, throwing puddles of bright light on the road ahead of me. After some minutes I rounded a bend, and as I headed through the trees, I could see the cluster of lights from Hill House. I edged off the road and pushed through the tall grass at the bottom of the incline. Then I started up, cautious to make as little noise as possible. I didn't want the dogs to hear me. I stopped midway in my climb and settled beneath some bushes. I could see the house clearly. Once I saw the giant shadow of Hobell cross in front of a window. Yes, there he was again, obviously pacing up and down. Nervous.

The dogs were nowhere to be seen but I dared not risk approaching closer just yet. An oath came from the house and I heard a thud and a yelp. Jess was even taking it out on his mastiffs. I settled myself in a more comfortable position and then turned on my side to look back down the hill.

Somewhere off in the darkness, I could not see, there was a whispering and rustling like the first breath of air on a very hot still summer night. The atmosphere around me was heavy. I was conscious that the moisture in it was plentiful. My face and the backs of my hands felt damp. I looked at the house and again Jess crossed the window in front of me. I heard him rattling at the locks on the huge front door, testing them. I saw his face at one of the windows then, the gigantic shoulders of the man taking up the whole space, but his expression etched in light was one of terror.

He looked out and upward. Then as an afterthought he opened the window and hung out for a moment sniffing at the air and craning his neck. From behind him in the room I heard the uneasy whine of one of the dogs. Jess pulled his head and shoulders in and shut the window, fumbling carefully with the lock. Then he turned away out of my sight.

The vague rustling as though of wind seemed to be moving toward the hill, toward me, toward the house from behind. Uneasiness tugged at my brain and my scalp tingled. Folks who have been in Elbow Creek know those fogs and they fear them deeply and unreasonably, but they have lived through them. Lived through them, though, behind their barred and bolted doors, huddled in their houses, and I was out here in the open!

I had the unmistakable feeling that some force was stalking the hill from the blackness behind me. The air began to move

in eccentric little cross-currents, and then as though withdrawn from a vacuum, I found the atmosphere flat, energyless, moist and wholly ominous. In my growing fear I lay as close as I could to the ground with my fingers dug into the soil that was a part of something I still knew and understood. Back of me and above me I knew this other was coming.

I opened my mouth to relieve the pressure on my ears and a drop of perspiration or fog-moisture, I wasn't sure which, plopped from my face.

ONE of the mastiffs inside the house whined and the other took up the howl. The mournful sound rose and fell and rose again. Then I heard Jess's screamed order to shut up. The sound of rustling that I had noticed behind me seemed to grow into a sound I could only describe as a low moistureful hiss. I felt clammy fingers of dampness move over me much as though someone had drawn a wet sheet across my back and head.

Instinctively, I unsheathed the knife at my hip. The heavy atmosphere pressed and weighed down on me until breathing was no longer unconscious and automatic but a labored effort. The pressure on me increased until it was almost as though some soft gelatinous presence rested on my body. In unreasoning animal fear I struck with my knife at the air around me. The absurdity of what I was doing took hold of me for a moment and helped me regain control, but a new horror fingered its way into my brain. I could swear that as I completed my instinctive, frenzied blows, there was a resistance to the knife and hand; not, mind you, as though one had struck a solid body, a tree trunk, but as if one had driven knife into something softer, much softer — like jelly!

I wiped the back of my right hand and felt the oily slime that coated it, but the sudden imperative barking of the dogs pulled my attention back to Hill House. I looked at the rambling mansion and it seemed much further away. The visual sentional was as though I were looking through the wrong end of an unclean telescope. The lights seemed dimmer. Was the electric power beginning to fail? I realized that this impression came about because of the thick oily layers of fog that were settling down, one after another around the house.

As I watched, my own fright at the feelings of chill alien dampness transferred into a sort of objective fascination at what I saw unfolding in front of my eyes. The house was being literally smothered. First its lights and then the very dark bulk of its whole frame became more and more indistinct. The barking alarm of the dogs grew into a crescendo, and then more awful than anything, the fog over me and around the house seemed to lisp and hiss. It almost sounded as though it were pronouncing in some inanimate and inarticulate way the name of Hobell, but of course my reason dismissed that as a trick of a overwrought imagination.

Then Jess, inside the house, began to scream. There is nothing more terrible in the world than the sound of a strong man screaming in unholy mortal terror. The cries went on and on and the house and its lights became merely a dimness and the dimness finally a darkness and then the cries sounded only in my head, in throbbing time to my heartbeats. For there was silence. Complete.

I somehow got to my feet and started down the hill although each step was like pushing through clammers' mud. I staggered and stumbled several times and nearly fell but fear gave me both strength and balance for I knew with a dreadful conviction that if I ever fell here and now, I would never rise again.

I gained the road somehow still running, my breath coming in short agonized wheezes. All the way along the highway I never dared once break my gait. I never dared turn my head for fear something would be there following me, something monstrous and deadly for all its soft oozing and lack of solidity. I ran and stumbled and staggered until I fell against the door to my room in town. Not once had I seen anybody on the road to or in town.

The fog was dispersing slowly but the villagers preferred to stay indoors. I fell on my bed and for a long time lay there, the springs creaking with my breathing. When my heart quieted down, I began to shake, first my legs then my arms, then my entire body, with a chill that seemed to

emanate from within, though my room and the night now were warming.

I HAD few doubts about what had happened up on the hill, what had happened to Jess in the house. I knew the stories of the other times when the fog had come, but I realized I had never fully accepted the terrible significance of something that defied explanation and yet demanded one because it was so very real.

It wasn't until the small hours of the morning that I dropped off into fitful sleep. The next morning after breakfast I headed as usual for the clerk's office in the Town Hall. The marshal greeted me.

"'Morning, Smith," he said.

"'Morning" I answered.

"Some fog last night, eh?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Wonder if . . . wonder if anything happened? Anything bad?"

I shrugged and turned to my desk. The marshal was troubled and wanted to go on speaking.

"Some of the folks that live nearest to Hobell's swear there was some terrible yelling and screaming from up that way." He paused ominously. "And then all the lights went out. Mighty funny, don't you think?"

"I don't know. I suppose so."

I turned away so that the marshal wouldn't notice the tremor in my hands. With the sunlight baking Elbow Creek's main street and streaming in the window of the Town Hall, the memory of my experiences last night were more bearable, and yet when I thought hard enough about them, the fear came back into my joints and soul.

"He was an old devil anyway," muttered the marshal. "That Jess Hobell!"

I nodded in agreement.

"If anything happened to him, it would be all right. All those Hobells. They're bad. That place has got a curse on it. Nobody was meant to live up there."

As I listened to him talk, I thought of the old man who had warned Jess long, long ago. That there was something evil that had a prior claim to the place. Something evil that came in from the Sound and followed Elbow Creek up the hill, up, up, settling down mushroom fashion over the land around and taking, killing what it wanted, carrying off in damp sticky pores of fog.

The marshal went on thinking out aloud as I sat at my desk. If anything had happened to Jess, the property would become the state's. The big old house and all the land. No one knew where Tom was or if he ever existed any more. And nobody hereabouts would take the place over even if they could buy it, and its value was far beyond any local person's reach.

After a while the marshal went out and I sat at my desk thinking. After all, there must be some reasonable explanation. The old wives' tales of the neighborhood about calves disappearing and children playing in the woods caught unaware by the fog and carried off, those were open to question. The two Hobell men and two women who'd disappeared some time ago were, I suddenly became convinced, frightened away just as Jess, if he'd gone from the hill, had been frightened away last night. Jess and all of them may have sneered at those tales of the fog, but underneath it all, cruel, brutal, superstitious men are the most susceptible to a suggestion of that sort.

THE fogs that rolled in periodically from the Sound blanketing Elbow Creek were unusually heavy. A stupid man's imagination and primitive fearfulness would do the rest. Those stories about the house shriveling, aging, were the human desire to attach human conditions to inanimate objects. A tree shriveling in fear from lightning, a house shrinking and aging overnight in a heavy fog. It was absurd.

Several days later, what I had suspected came true. It was evident that Jess was no longer at the Hill House. He and his dogs had cleared out, apparently that night. Of course the villagers called it "disappearing." "Taken" by the fog.

A week later Hill House had a new tenant. I was there with my belongings, and it seemed strange at first, very strange, but I grew accustomed to it soon. There'd been some trouble and a great deal of explaining at the Town Hall, and as I stood in the large downstairs room of the mansion and looked in the full-length mirror at my scarred misshapen face, I realized that my impatience at the marshal and his surprise was not justified. He'd looked at me when

I told him and his face had gotten white and then pink.

"But you *can't* be Tom Hobell! Why, you don't look like him, man! Your face. It's, it's—."

I reminded him of the fight I'd had with Jess years ago, of the beating I'd taken, and then I'd shown him these papers I'd had, my birth certificate issued by that very state, a certificate from the county school. He'd wagged his head in wonder, and then the same reticence had come over him that characterized all of the villagers in their dealings with the Hobells. I roared at him until he brought the town commissioner, and the three of us signed papers legally binding the house to me as last of the Hobells.

I didn't care then what had happened to Jess and the others. I had property now and the house itself made me a man of potential wealth. I'd waited for years for this to get rid of Jess somehow, and the legend had done it for me. That night I had gone to kill him. In the fog I thought I could get him and dispose of the body and the villagers would think, the fools would think he'd gone the way Hobells do, the way all people who dare to live on the hill do.

I could laugh now at the memory of the way the fog had scared even me. For I had believed, a corner of my mind had, in the foolishness that had been talked about for so long here.

I carefully went through the house from top to bottom. Plenty of clothes, foodstuffs, liquor enough to last one man a year or more. I even found the strongbox back of the trunks in the cellar where we'd always kept it, but Jess had never let anybody go near it.

I thought of the time I'd spent in the miserable little job of town clerk and I looked at the money in the box greedily. This was one Hobell who was going to enjoy himself. I thought of my wife long dead, for a moment, but I could do much better now. I could bring the best woman in the countryside to this place, and I would.

One thing bothered that corner of my mind that I'd noticed was still susceptible to the fog legend. The stout old beams and uprights of the house *were* twisted strangely and the outside clapboards were warped and swollen in spots. This was what lent authenticity to the villagers' tales of the house that aged in the fog. But I was sure it was some freak result of weather conditions. Perhaps the fog did play a part and then the blistering sun beating down on the hill's crest. But there was nothing wrong. Nothing wrong, I told myself.

I know little of construction, and the thick pastelike substance that I found under the shingles like glue and here and there in the cracks on the floor I dismissed as some kind of tar or wax. I think I looked forward to the next fog with an almost eager anticipation, because the very next day I'd enjoy strutting into town and the villagers who fondly had expected my "disappearance" would be so disappointed.

Several summer weeks passed and the weather remained clear. A couple of times I went to the village, and the townspeople avoided me assiduously. It made me angry to think I'd been accepted as "Smith" but now they knew me to be a Hobell they hated me and wanted none of me. Well, we'd see to that! I was potentially the most powerful man in the whole neighborhood. I didn't plan to remain a recluse the way Jess had. The carousing and occasional beatings-up of villagers perpetrated by my brothers didn't appeal to me. A more methodical system was indicated. I'd put them out of business. I'd squeeze their small narrow existence even more. And I'd foil their uneducated superstitious awe of the fog by walking in town where all could see me the day after!

IT WAS a couple of months later that the fall began to sweep across the country turning the Sound from blue to gray. I knew on the way home from the village that evening with supplies that there would be a big fog this night. I knew it from the way the villagers had looked at me slyly, almost eagerly; I knew it from the first breaths of clammy mist I felt on my face as I climbed the hill to Hobell House.

I ate an elaborate and lengthy supper and paid no attention to the weather as the hour grew late. There was a chill in the air and I'd fired some wood in the huge fireplace. I was sitting idly in a chair before the flames with a drink at my side when the flames hissed and dipped. I frowned. The embers

sizzled again and steam rose. Water was coming down the chimney flue. I thought of the fog then but resisted going to the window. The big room seemed somehow dimmer and I lit another light. Despite my efforts, the fire slowly died away. I must remind myself to fix the flue. It probably wasn't drawing right.

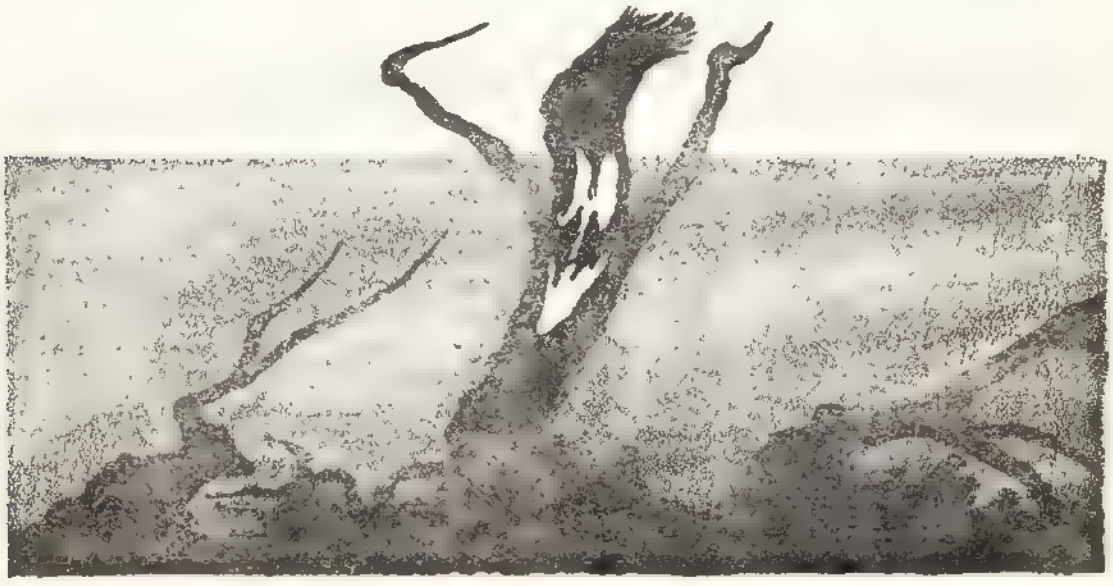
I thought of going upstairs to my bedroom but it was still warmer down here. I heard the rustling outside then, just as I had heard it months ago the night I'd lain on the hill and watched. An ember fell on the hearth and I jumped. The room was silent now except for the sound of my own breathing. Outside, the wind rustled the trees. Of course it was the wind. There was the sound of something plumping against one of the windows. Rain? It had not been raining earlier that evening.

I downed what was left in my glass in one gulp, stood up. A board above me creaked like the crossbeam in an old wooden ship. I imagined I felt a faint motion of the floor. The rustling outside grew, but I stayed away from the windows. I blinked my eyes. The electricity—it was failing! Was this some trick of the villagers to scare *me?* The lights were yellow, yellow with halos of mist around them. The mist was in here. Of course. It comes down the chimney, I thought. Nobody ever said there wouldn't be fog. I passed my hand before my eyes and noticed in the failing light that the palm shone with dampness. There was a hiss as the last ember in the grate went out . . . and a hiss that was not from the fire but a part of the rustling outside. *Or was it in here as well?*

The lights were candle-flame size now, smaller, smaller, and then blackness. I had a torch on the table. I found it in the dark. The damn thing wouldn't work! In my pocket were some matches. I fumbled with the cover, struck one. It gave a tiny sighing gasp and died.

I opened my mouth to scream and felt a wet semi-substance fill the aperture. I kept thinking, I must think. . . . Tomorrow I will walk in the village street. Something was against my face, against all of me like jelly—tomorrow — I — will — walk — in — the village — street. The gelatin mass had filled the room now and was bursting upward. It was me and I . . . I became It, rising up with the incredibly high note of something twanging in my head. The last shred of life's consciousness, the last thought: Tomorrow — I — will — walk — in — the — village — street. . . .

And then to be drawn upward and around in a swirling vortex of incredible sound that is soundless and sucked out of life to billow and rustle and whisper with the Fog, to return again only as part of the grayness and dampness and secret night. . . .



The Dai Sword

By
MANLY WADE WELLMAN

"LOTS of shops, lots of private collectors would like to bid on it," the little straw-tinted man assured Thunstone, "but I felt that you—the sort of man you are, with occult knowledge and interests—ought to have first refusal."

In his comfortable chair by the club window, Thunstone was almost as tall sitting down as was the straw-tinted man standing up. Thunstone's long broad hand took the pipe from under his clipped dark mustache, Thunstone's wide gloomy eyes studied the curved sword that had been laid on the magazine stand. From the chair opposite, young Everitt was leaning forward to look, too.

"Arabian sword?" asked young Everitt. He liked to slide himself into private discussions. His father had been a director

. . . and a Dai blade must never be drawn except for the shedding of blood

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

of this club, and an acquaintance of Thunstone. Young Everitt wanted to be a personal friend, or anyway said so. Thunstone was slow about admitting men and women to his personal friendship. He hated to be prejudiced about things like eyes being too close together, but he was. And young Everitt's bright, small eyes were very close together indeed.

"It is a sword from Nepal," the straw-tinted man was informing Everitt. "A sword of the warrior class, peculiar to the Dais. They are an offshoot, a schism one might say, of the Gurkhas."

"I thought Gurkhas were those little pickle things," smirked Everitt at Thunstone, who smiled back but not very broadly. "Why is this sword worth so much?"

"Because it is a thing of ritual," replied the straw-tinted man. "Because there are so few such swords ever offered for sale. Because," and his pale little forefinger tapped the wire-bound hilt, "it is set with precious jewels."

At the word "jewels," young Everitt bounded eagerly out of his chair and bent to look more closely.

"Jewels, all right," he agreed, as if he had been requested to pass judgment. "Not awfully good ones, though. There's a flaw in the ruby. And those emeralds, I'm not very wrought up about them." He scowled, and his close-set eyes seemed to crowd each other even more. "The one on the pommel, the dull one set in silver—what is it?"

"A Dai stone," said the straw-tinted man. His eyes, which were also straw-tinted, turned to seek Thunstone's. He did not seem to like Everitt.

"Dai—dye?" echoed Everitt. "You ought to dye it, some brighter color." Again he chuckled over his own pun. "Never heard of one."

"From the name of that stone the Dais take the name of their sect. . . . I wouldn't draw the sword, not now."

But Everitt had already cleared the blade from its scabbard of brass-studded leather. The steel shone as with frantic scrubbing and polishing. Thunstone, returning his pipe to his mouth, fancied that he could mirror his own square face in that brightness. The curve of the blade was double-edged, not only on the outer arc but the inner curve, which was almost as abrupt as that of a fish hook. And the point itself looked deadly sharp, like the sting of a wasp.

"I am afraid," said Thunstone gently, "that I'm not a good prospect for the sale. May I ask where you got such a specimen?"

The straw-colored man shook his head. He might have been deploring Thunstone's refusal, or declining to tell the history of his acquisition. "I had hoped," he said after a moment, "that you would be interested in the history of the Dais."

"I know a little about the Dais," Thunstone replied, still gently. "Not much, but a little. I am not of their faith, and I have no use for so peculiar a part of it as a Dai sword."

EVERITT suddenly squealed out an oath, not proper language in that quiet and conservative club room. Still holding the drawn sword in one hand, he furiously wrung the fingers of the other.

"I was just going to put it back in the sheath," he told them, "and—but you can see for yourself!"

Had he been years younger, you would have said that Everitt pouted. He thrust his hand under Thunstone's nose. The quivering thumb had been punctured at the center of the ball, and blood trickled in a shiny thread. Thunstone meditated that no artificial scarlet can come near the brightness of fresh blood. Drawing his hand back, Everitt sucked the thumb scowlingly, like a bad-tempered baby.

"Of course," said the straw-tinted man, taking the sword and sheathing it without mishap, "the Dais would find that accident a fortunate one for you."

"Fortunate?" repeated Everitt thickly, past the thumb in his mouth.

It was Thunstone who said: "As I understand it, a Dai blade must never be drawn except for the shedding of blood. The sect insists that bloodless drawing is the worst of ill luck."

"And, should they draw for polishing or sharpening only, or for exhibition only," amplified the straw-tinted man, "they will prick themselves deliberately, just as you did just now inadvertantly, to avert the ill

luck." He weighed the sheathed weapon in his hand. "I'm sorry, Mr. Thunstone, that you are not interested. As I suggested before, perhaps I should show it to a collector or—"

"Wait," said Everitt.

He had taken his thumb out of his mouth. His narrow-set eyes watched a new bead of blood as it slowly formed on the wet skin. When he spoke again, he sounded ill-humored. "If Thunstone doesn't want the thing, maybe I do. How much for it, Mister?"

Thunstone, refilling his pipe, watched. The straw-tinted man remained silent for a moment. Finally he named a sum, and he sounded as though he were trying to ask too much. Everitt snorted.

"That's pretty steep," he said. "What about—"

"I cannot bargain."

"Then I'll take it." With his unwounded hand, Everitt produced a wallet of dark brown leather, and opened it. "Prefer cash, do you." He flipped out some bills. "Keep the odd six dollars for your trouble in coming up here."

"I never accept tips," the straw-tinted man said tonelessly. From his own wallet, a foreign-looking fold made to accommodate notes of another size and shape than American money, he counted out a five and a one. He gazed for a moment at the sword, at Thunstone, and at Everitt. He bowed, or rather nodded, like a toy with a moveable head.

"May I wish you good luck with this purchase," he said, and passed the sword to Everitt. "It is very rare and curious in this part of the world. Thank you."

When he had departed, Everitt looked sharply at Thunstone.

"I suppose," he said, "you want to know why I bought this little gimmick."

"I don't believe in requiring explanations from people," replied Thunstone.

"Well, I'm a rationalist and an empiricist," announced Everitt, who was neither. "I'll show you, and show everybody, that this isn't any magic tool—it's just so much metal and bad jewelry, put together in a funny shape." He studied his thumb again. "The bleeding's already stopped. This time I won't be so clumsy."

Picking up the sword, he drew it with a rather stagey flourish. Even in Everitt's fist, unschooled to swords, it balanced perfectly. Its blade again caught silvery lights. Thunstone speculated as to what alloy had gone to its smelting and forging. Everitt smiled rather loftily, and dipped the curved point back into the sheath, smacking the blade smartly home. An instant later he had dropped the sword, swearing more loudly than before.

"I've cut myself again!" he cried sulkily.

MR. MAHINGUPTA, when visited that evening by John Thunstone, made him welcome in his study as he would have welcomed less than ten other Occidentals. Mr. Mahingupta was smaller even than the straw-tinted man, with a youthful slimness and spryness utterly deceptive; for he was old and wise, nobody this side of the seas knew quite how old and how wise. His brilliant eyes slanted a bit in the finest of brown faces, and his clothes were exquisitely tailored without extremity of cut. He offered cigarettes and a little silver cup of brandy that must have been quite as old as he himself.

"To call the Dais an offshoot of the Gurkha cult is pure ignorance," he answered Thunstone's query, in accents more Oxonian than Herbert Marshall's. "We Gurkhas aren't a cult at all, sir. In faith we are Hindu, and in blood mixed Aryan and Mongol. As Rajputs—men of the warrior caste—we maintain a certain individuality, of course. You know that Gurkha record in many wars." Mr. Mahingupta sighed, perhaps remembering campaigns and stricken fields of his distant youth. "Far too many people misunderstand the East and, misunderstanding, loudly persuade others to misunderstand also."

"Then there is no different quality to the way the Gurkha worship?" prompted Thuntstone. "Different, that is, from orthodox Hinduism?"

"The difference is in descent and training only," Mr. Mahingupta assured him. "In the remote beginning, great Brahma fathered the various castes. From his mouth issues the first of the priests, hence their wisdom. From his right arm was born Shatria, first of my warrior forbears, hence our

strength. Merchants sprang from his thighs, laborers and mechanics from his feet."

Thunstone had heard all that years before. "The Dais," he pursued. "Are they also of warrior caste?"

Mr. Mahingupta's mouth-corners turned up briefly and thinly. "Who can say whence they came? In Nepal exist many of them, in towns close to the Himalayas. For all I know, or anyone knows, they may descend from the abominable ice-devils. As to their claims of power I may not judge. I do not like them, and neither would you, I hope."

"I told you of the Dai jewel in the hilt of the sword. What is it?"

"Jewels," said Mr. Mahingupta, "should be cleanly dug up from under ground, not evoked by magical formula. I do not have patience with such strange chemistry or alchemy or whatever. From what I hear, every Dai stone is of artificial origin, or anyway of preternatural origin. I saw but one in my life." The lips pursed, still harshly. "It served as the single eye of an excessively unpleasant little statue. I dug it out as a gesture of defiance toward those who worshipped the thing. This happened more than your lifetime ago, but see."

He extended a slender, delicate hand. The brown forefinger was crooked as from a bad fracture, and seamily scarred as from deep burns. That was all Mr. Mahingupta said about the adventure, and probably not even Everitt would have urged him to say more. Mr. Mahingupta lifted his brandy cup.

"Though I despise and denounce the Dai worship and all it claims," he went on, "yet I am fraid that the unhappy young man you mention is as good as dead now, for his idiocies. Be comforted that civilization will advance unhampered by such a clumsy fool and boor. I regret, my dear friend, that I can help you no further."

"You mean that you can't," asked Thunstone, "or that you won't?"

"Both," said Mr. Mahingupta.

THE night was not too far spent when Thunstone left Mr. Mahingupta, and he called on young Everitt.

Everitt's quarters were what might stand for the popular idea of a bachelor apartment. It was a place in the eighties, with a large living room, two bedrooms to one side, and a kitchen with a long-idle range, an electric refrigerator, and rows and rows of liquor bottles. On the walls of the living room hung various consciously male paraphernalia—crossed foils, boxing gloves, hockey sticks, none of which Everitt knew how to use. Higher up were fastened the stuffed heads of animals Everitt had not himself killed. Everitt wore a wine-dark robe with a luxuriantly folded white scarf, and greeted Thunstone with a cordiality over-warmed by drink.

"So you found the way up here at last," he said. "What'll you have? Cocktail? Swizzle? Name it and I'll fix it."

"Nothing, thanks," demurred Thunstone, who would rather savor in retrospect the brandy Mr. Mahingupta had given him. "I was in the neighborhood, and I thought I'd see how your hand was doing. That second cut was pretty bad."

Everitt drew from the pocket of his robe the hand in question. It was taped over the ball of the thumb, and most of the palm was swaddled in criss-crossed gauze.

"The doctor asked me if I'd been bitten," he said. "It got kind of inflamed or infected—Lord! How he hurt me with that germicide stuff!" Everitt bit his lip at the memory.

Thunstone looked closely at the hand. The fingers were flushed and a bit swollen, but he could not judge if they were dangerously sore. Everitt slid the hand back into his pocket, and nodded at the wall.

"Anyway, there it hangs. How does it look?"

He had tacked up a square of figured Indian cloth, and on this was displayed the Dai sword, drawn and slanted across its own sheath. Again Thunstone remarked the silvery glow of the metal, almost like the glow of great heat. Thumb tacks held blade and sheath in place, and one of these at the pommel was red. No, that was the stone that had seemed so dull in the club. It gave off a color-tint both flushed and gloomy like —well, like a drop of blood gone a little stale.

"That jewel on the hilt does catch the light funny, doesn't it?" said Everitt,

watching Thunstone. "And I thought it was dull."

Thunstone took a step nearer the wall. "You drew it again, I see. Maybe you're wise not to return it to the sheath."

"I think it looks better displayed like that," explained Everitt, lighting a cigarette. "I'll sheathe it again, though, any time I feel like it. Right now, if you like, just to show you I'm not afraid."

"I wish," said Thunstone, "that a man I know were here to look at the thing. His name's E. Hoffmann Price."

"The writer?" Everitt's scorn for all who wrote was manifest.

"He's more than that," replied Thunstone. "For one thing, he's an accomplished fencer and understands swords thoroughly. He's likewise a recognized student of the Orient, and as for occult matters, he's an expert."

"Bring him around some time if you like," granted Everitt, "but don't let him think he could buy the thing back from me. At first I felt I was overpaying; but didn't somebody or other say that it isn't what you pay for anything that sets its value—it's whether you still want it after you've bought it—"

"Apparently you still want it, then," suggested Thunstone.

"Wouldn't be without it," Everitt assured him airily. "And, just to show that I'm perfectly ready to sheathe it at any time—"

He extended a hand toward the hilt with the flushed jewel. At that instant the doorbell rang.

Everitt went to open the door. There stood the straw-tinted man.

"I am sorry to call so late," he greeted them, "but I wish to rectify a mistake. It seems," and he gulped, "that I had no right to sell that Dai sword."

HIS straw tint was paler than it had been, as though straw had been coated with frost. His eyes caught the sheen of the weapon on the wall. "There it is," he said eagerly. "May I return the money and have it back?"

"You may not," Everitt told him.

"I say that I should not have sold it."

"You've found that out a trifle late," Everitt reminded, mixing himself a new drink. "Anyway, the sale's completed. Thunstone here was a witness to the transaction. I paid you money, which you put in your pocket, and that was that."

"I'll pay you a difference of—"

"No," said Everitt.

"I'll double the sum—"

"If it's worth that much for you to buy back, it's worth that much for me to hang onto." Everitt grinned and squinted. "I don't need money, Mister, but I've a liking for the sword."

The straw-tinted man lifted his shoulders wearily. Very narrow, thin shoulders they seemed just then. He faced Thunstone appealingly. "Persuade your friend," he begged.

"Thunstone knows that I won't change my mind," said Everitt. "Some people call me stubborn, some that I'm just determined. "Take your choice, but I won't sell you your sword again. If you stole it, or otherwise acted illegally, that's your funeral, not mine. Now, how about a drink? Drinking's a good way to end any argument."

The straw-tinted man shook his head and turned back to the door.

"Wait," Thunstone called to him. "I'm coming with you." To Everitt he said, "promise me that you'll leave that Dai sword alone until I see you again."

"I'll make no such idiotic promise," snickered Everitt. His manner was the sort that Thunstone was apt to resent, even violently. But the big man said no more, not even a farewell. He followed the straw-tinted stranger out and down to the street. It was a fine night, without a moon.

"I suggest that you tell me enough to help me save Everitt," ventured Thunstone after a little silence. But the straw-tinted man shook his head slowly.

"I dare not," he almost moaned. "I'm in a sad enough situation as it is."

"Have the Dais been after you?"

"I know of no Dais in this hemisphere."

'That doesn't answer my question," insisted Thunstone. "Have they been after you? . . . You don't answer, which means that they have."

"I do not deny it," said the straw-tinted man. "Once among the Dais, you are forever touched with something of their influence, even from a great distance. You,

sir, have been considerate of me, and I would rather not afflict you with—with what afflicts me."

"You are not a Dai?" Thunstone prompted.

"Once I might have become one. I sought out their scholars and teachers, went a little way into their lore. Why not? An American has become a lama in Tibet, which is harder by far to do. Anyway, I progressed far enough to have the sword. I had won the right to possess it, but not the right to relinquish it. That truth I realized tonight—the thought came into my heart, it was put there from somewhere far off. Now I feel doom growing near and dense around me."

He shuddered, and Thunstone steadied him with a massive hand on his shoulder.

"Come home with me," bade Thunstone.

AT THUNSTONE'S hotel, there were books to study, as usual. One was a translation by Gaster of that manscript *Sword of Moses* which is believed by many to date from earlier than the fourth century and which has been called by Oxford scholars a connecting link between old Grecian mysteries and the magical works of the Middle Ages.

"Know that the man who wishes to use the sword must free himself for three days from accidental polution," read Thunstone, "and from every unclean thing . . ."

Like the ceremony of knighthood, he mused as he read, wherein the aspiring youth must fast, bathe, pray and keep vigil before being vouchsafed the weapon which would be his badge of gentility and prowess. Were not the swords of heroes rated in the old stories as having special power and personality, even bearing names like living beings—Gram, Durandal, Excalibur? Thunstone gazed at his silent guest, wondering what sort of initiation he had undergone. Undoubtedly none that Everitt would endure.

Thunstone took a second volume, the *Key of Solomon*, as translated by "H. G. on April 8, 1572." It was a sizeable work divided into ten parts, and plainly had been well thumbed before Thunstone had gained possession of it. Especially worn were the pages of the last section, entitled *"Of experiments extraordinary that be forbidden of good men.*

Thunstone found references to swords from almost the first pages, and there was a sub-section *of swords and knives.*

> It is necessary in operation of artes to have swords and knives and other instruments of which circles may be made and other necessary operations. . . . If swords be necessary, let them be scoured and clean from the first hour. . . .

There followed diagrams to show the "form and fashion" of such instruments. Two of the many outlines, entitled *cuttellus niger* and *cuttellus albus*, were reminiscent of the curved, double-edged Dai blade. There was mention also of other magical weapons, including lance, scimitar, sickle, dagger, poignard, and a knife called Andamco. Thunstone reached for a third book.

This, a massy tome bound in red cloth, was a beautifully printed English work, by a man whom Thunstone had often opposed and once or twice damaged. Here and there little gatherings and cults use it as a veritable bible, taking to heart its startling teachings and going through the forms of its rather pompous rituals. It is a slipshod work, containing some passages of startling beauty as well as masses of carelessly written and wordy nonsense. On the next to the last page Thunstone found what he was looking for:

> . . . Let the scholar take steel, smelted according to the previous formula, and by his understanding skill beat, grind and sharpen it into a sword. Let it be engraved with the words and symbols ordained, and employed in the performance of mystries. Let none touch, save those deserving . . .

Thunstone slammed shut the book and put it away.

"So," he said aloud, "you made the weapon yourself?"

"I did," replied the straw-tinted man, with an air of tragic resignation.

"Each Dai makes his own? Even to the Dai jewel on the pommel?"

"That is given us." The desperate eyes of strange color sought Thunstone. "Do you think I sold because I needed money? No—only to rid myself of the sword and all memory of the Dais. But they know,

far off in their own country, and send me their thoughts." The eyes closed. "I hear them now. They say to return to Everitt and demand the sword—tomorrow."

"Then we did wrong to leave him tonight," said Thunstone at once, and got quickly to his feet. "Go back to him now —wait, we both go back."

He put on his hat, and from a corner took a rather heavy walking stick of Malacca, with a silver band around its balance. "This was a gift from an old friend of mine, a Judge Pursuivant," he explained. "I'm ready to go if you are."

THIS time there was no response to their ringing at Everitt's door. Thunstone pushed at the panel with the ferrule of his stick, and it creaked inward on its hinges. They walked in.

The lights were on, and showed them Everitt, lying in his crumpled robe against the wall beneath the square of cloth on which the Dai sword had hung. Quickly Thunstone strode to his side and knelt. Everitt did not move when Thunstone touched him. He was dead, with his throat slit neatly as if by a razor-sharp edge.

Clutched in Everitt's unbandaged hand was the sword, snugly set in its sheath. The stone at the pommel gleamed red and baleful as fire in mist.

"A third time he tried to sheathe it unblooded," the straw-tinted man was babbling. "The third time, as in so many cases, was the finality-time. It turned in his hand and killed him."

Thunstone put a hand toward the weapon, but the straw-tinted man was before him, snatching at the hilt. Everitt's dead hand remained closed on the sheath, and the sword came clear as the straw-tinted man pulled at it. Its blade gleamed silver-white and spotless.

"No blood on it," said Thunstone.

"Because it drinks the blood in, as sand drinks water. Only the stone shows what has happened," and a pale-tan finger tapped the pommel. "Now, how to sheathe it once more?"

The strangely colored eyes gazed calculatingly at Thunstone, who straightened his bulk and, standing erect, gazed back.

"I can explain to the police," he said. "At least, there are certain high officials of the police who are ready to accept any explanation I care to make about anything. But that thing you hold must be disposed of quickly. I suggest that we drive into the country and bury it deeply in some field or woods." Stooping, he pulled the sheath from Everitt's inert fingers. "How shall we put it back into this?"

"It will not go in without bloodshed," the straw-tinted man said, weighing the curved sword with practised grip. "The thing has a spirit of its own. It is like the *Yan*—the devil—they say lives in that sword owned by the Fire-King. Probably you never heard of it."

"I've heard," Thunstone assured him. He held his stick horizontally across his body, right hand at the knob, left hand lightly holding it near the ferrule. "Frazer refers to it in *The Golden Bough*. Isn't that the sword owned by a ruler in the Cambodian jungle, of which it is claimed that if it is drawn the world will come to an end?"

"It may not be so powerful, but it has power, from the blood it has drunk," said the straw-tinted man. "This, too, must drink blood. Mr. Thunstone, I regret what I must do. Perhaps I need only make a slight wound, if you do not resist."

Thunstone cleared his throat harshly. "I give no blood to that thing. It has had victory enough, over you and over poor Everitt."

"You are unarmed, you cannot refuse." By a slight alteration of the position of his wrist, the straw-tinted man brought the point into line with Thunstone's broad chest. He sidled gingerly in.

Thunstone twisted the stick in his hands. The lower part seemed to slip away, baring a slim straight blade, bright as the Dai sword. He dropped both the hollow loose part and the sheath he had taken from Everitt.

"I expected something like that," smiled the straw-tinted man. "Of course, neither of us are being personal about this. Your sword cane cannot help you. This is a sword of power. It must be wetted with blood."

"Come on," invited Thunstone, his great body easily assuming the attitude of a fencer.

The curved blade swept fiercely at him,

clanged against his own interposed strip of metal, and bounded back like a ball from a shutter. The straw-tinted man exclaimed, as though an electric shock had run up his arm. He fell back, reassumed position and lunged again, this time with the point.

A single movement of Thunstone's lighter blade engaged and deflected the attack.

"I too have a sword of power," he said. "I had not time to warn you, but watch."

He feinted, coaxed his opponent into trying another slash. This he parried and, before the straw-tinted man could recover, darted in his own point. It struck solidly at the pommel of the Dai sword, projecting beyond the fist that held it. There was a sharp *ping*, and the red-flushed jewel bounced away across the floor like a thrown marble. Next instant Thunstone had dipped his blade under, engaged again, and with a quick press and slap had beaten the heavier weapon from the straw-tinted man's grasp.

A warning jab with the point made his disarmed opponent drop back. Then, "Watch," said Thunstone again, and pointed his own blade at the fallen Dai sword.

There was responsive movement in the thing, like the furtive retreating rustle of a frightened snake. As his point approached it, it shifted on the floor, moving on the planks with a little grating tinkle. For a moment it seemed to set its point hungrily toward the straw-tinted man, but Thunstone's weapon struck it smartly, and it faced away. Like a bit of conjuror's apparatus dragged by an invisible thread on the stage it moved, at first slowly and jerkily, then with more speed and smoothness. He herded it painstakingly toward the fallen leather sheath.

"How—how—" the straw-tinted man was stammering in absolute incomprehension.

Urged inexorably by a last touch of Thunstone's blade, the sword seemed fairly to scurry the last distance. It slid into the sheath with an abrupt *chock*, and lay quivering.

Thunstone picked it up and laid it carefully on a table.

"My blade is silver, a great specific against black magic," he now had time to say. "Look at the inscription. It's old, a little worn, but perhaps you can make out the Latin."

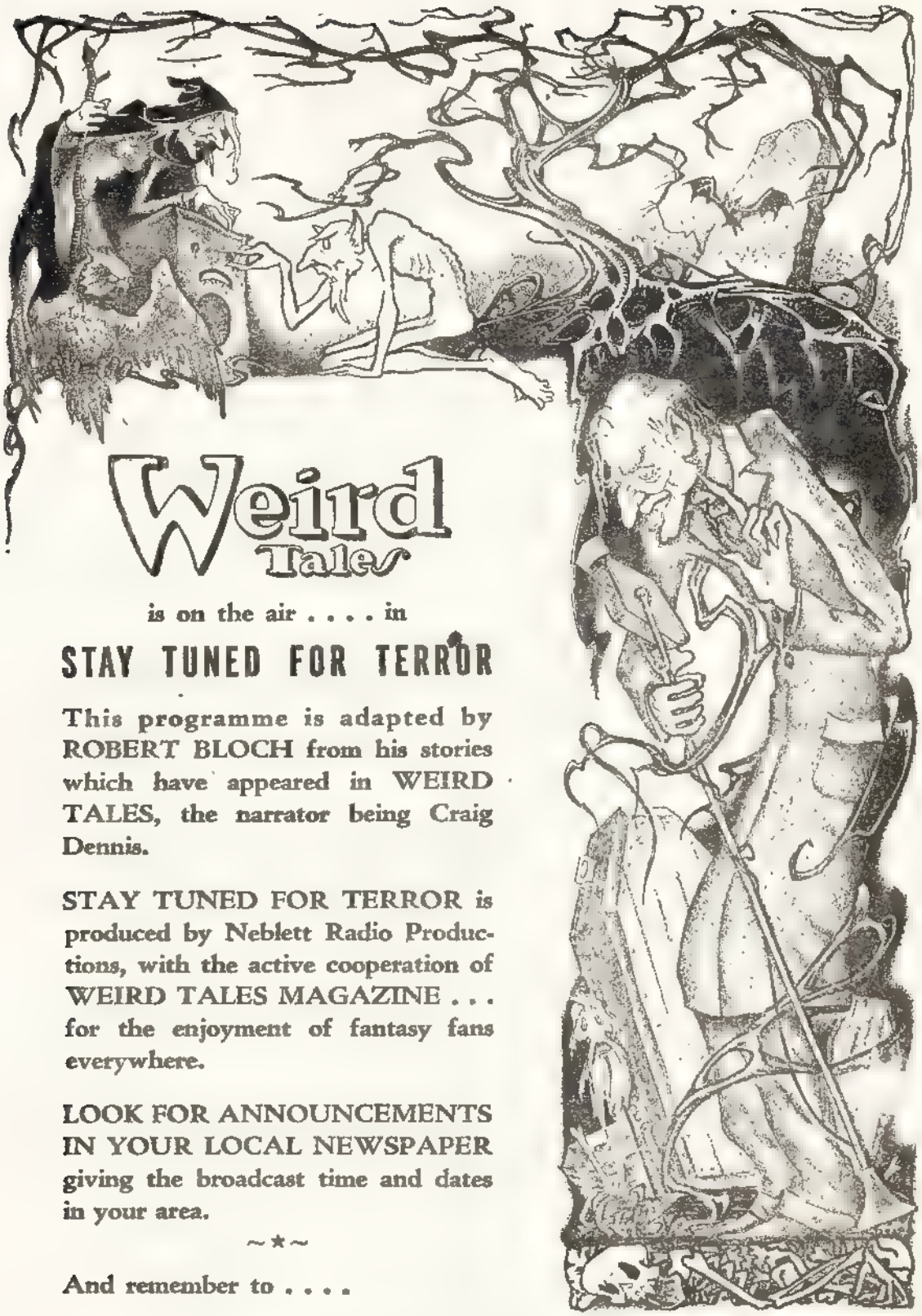
The pale straw-tinted face bent to read. "*Sic pereant omnes inimici tui,*" he repeated slowly. "My Latin is not as good as it might be."

"'So perish all thine enemies,'" translated Thunstone. "From the Song of Deborah, in the book of Judges. Pursuivant said that this silver sword was forged by St. Dunstan himself, and he was able to conquer no less an enemy than Satan. Pick up the Dai stone in your handkerchief. We can bury it along with the sword."

The straw-tinted man knelt to retrieve the jewel.

"It is dull again, as though all the blood had run out of it," he said, and rose, facing Thunstone hopefully. "And I have no sense of any more thought-commands from far away. Am I free? Why do you interest yourself in matters like these?"

"I sometimes wonder," replied John Thunstone, fitting his sword cane back together.



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Devil Dog

By MANLY BANISTER

THE Marines had established a beachhead on Watinau. For three days they had driven inland against an enemy who crept from palm to palm, dodged from foxhole to foxhole. He was seldom seen alive, plentifully so dead. The advance was grimly cheerful, though slow.

The condition were anomolous, elsewhere than at war. Lieutenant Barkis, in charge of the War Dog Detachment, felt cheerful, too. The entire three days had cost him no more than one dog and one handler. The dog, a Doberman Pinscher scout, had been caught in a crossfire of Nipponese machine-guns and slashed to ribbons. The same storm of lead had lodged a couple of bullets in the handler's thigh.

The jungle was bad on Watinau. It was thick and treacherous. Signalman struggled through rancid growth and clouds of mosquitoes, splashing sometimes chest-deep through swamp, to lay the wire. And the Nips sneaked through the lines and nipped it. Or their artillery and mortars blew it

to shredded ends, and the weary signalmen struggled some more to keep the communication lines open.

The dogs were a Godsend. All the Marines agreed that they were. Bluff, red-faced Colonel Marty congratulated Lieutenant Barkis, whenever they met, on the work his dogs were doing. He dictated a paragraph of praise to the combat correspondents, and the Colonel's words were reprinted in the daily papers of every state in the Union. Lieutenant Barkis was justifiably proud of his dogs.

The dogs crept through the thickest jungle, bellies on the ground, faster than a man could travel in the open. They carried messages, requesting reinforcements and supplies. They scouted for the advancing troops, alerting enemy machine-gun nests, snipers, and sundry ambuscades. They saved lives, Colonel Marty said, and they saved time—two of the most priceless commodities in the store of an attacking force.

Then . . .

"ALEX—poor old Alex!" babbled the corporal. "Stretched out like a sack, he is, and blood all over."

Lieutenant Barkis erupted from the shallow slit-trench in which he had slept, rolled in his poncho. It was barely light. A mist hovered at the edge of the jungle.

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

"Alex? Where?"

The corporal gestured vaguely into the dirty gray mist. His stubbled cheeks looked wan in the death-light.

"Thirty yards from my foxhole. I woke up, and Alex was gone. I got up and looked around—"

Barkis pulled on his steel helmet and spoke curtly.

"Show me."

"He must have heard something and went to investigate," the corporal added nervously. "A Jap knifed the life out of him."

Barkis shrugged irritably. Mist-dampened folds of his camouflaged poncho rustled against his legs.

"The fighting is five miles from here," he objected.

The earth glistened blackly about the rigid, splayed figure. The foggy illumination glinted dully on reddish highlights. The surf throbbed a muffled tempo. Mist coiled and drifted among the palms, holding itself aloof from the two men and the dead thing at their feet.

Alex had not died easily. His feet were stretched out from his body as if still clawing an illusive enemy. The eyes were wide and glaring, lips curled back upon a welter of bloody foam and glistening teeth, snarling dead, futile hatred—futile, for hate nor courage had prevailed, and Alex had died with the wind whistling from the gory rent in his throat.

Lieutenant Barkis dropped to one knee beside the dead dog, lifted the sleek head of the Doberman, and let it drop gently.

"No Jap knife did that," he observed shakily. "His throat was ripped out by teeth. He must have fought with another dog."

"We'd a heard that, Lieutenant, wouldn't we?"

"Not necessarily. They're trained to be silent. Have you checked the other dogs?"

"No, sir. I found Alex like that and came straight to get you."

"Get me Sergeant Stranger. I'll wait here."

The corporal drifted into the mist. Barkis pondered a moment more, then got close to the ground, combed the territory for sign.

He straightened at a sound. The corporal returned in the company of a lean, saturnine looking man. Sergeant Stranger wiped his hands on his dungarees, rubbed a stubbled jaw.

"Corporal Hanocek says you think Alex was in a fight with a dog."

Barkis got to his feet, slapped detritus from his knees, adjusted the folds of his poncho.

"I know he was. There are dog tracks all around. Some are Alex's. Some are bigger. We'll check the other dogs at once, Sergeant." He turned to the corporal. "Hanocek—that's your name?—run along and find out if the watch heard anything. When you come back, look for me. I'll be with the handlers."

"I got six scouts and four messengers at the front," Stranger volunteered. "The rest of them are here. I could check my records—"

"The dogs at the front don't concern us," Barkis told him. "It was a dog here at hand who did that to Alex."

"The handlers keep their dogs pretty close," Stranger put in dubiously.

"Alex got away from Hanocek."

The sergeant was silent.

A check of the dogs proved fruitless.

"Alex couldn't have got what he did without giving a little in return," Stranger observed. "And the dogs are all where they belong, and clean."

"Not a scratch, not a drop of blood," agreed Barkis. He was puzzled.

Hanocek came out of the soupy mist.

"The guards didn't hear a thing, sir."

Barkis nodded. "I didn't suppose they had. We'd have known." He frowned. "Another team out of action. Yours, Hanocek? The corporal nodded. "Of course," Barkis went on. "Well, give your men the word, Sergeant. Keep the dogs on leash at all times. We can't afford to have this."

"Yes, sir," agreed the sergeant. He scowled at Hanocek. Barkis went away.

THEY buried Alex and piled lumps of coral upon his grave. On top, they stuck a crude cross made by tying broken boughs together. They hung Alex's bloody collar on the cross, and below it a board with the scrawled inscription: *"ALEX, a U. S. Marine. Killed in the line of duty."* It was terse, a fitting epitaph for a Marine.

The swift flow of battle progressed throughout the day. The enemy ebbed to the crest of Watinau's hills and hid out in caves and among boulders. The advance rested, waiting for the artillery to catch up. The sun drifted through clouds of red and gold to its setting behind the hills of Watinau. A shadow rose up from out of the ground, embraced the flaming sky, and came down upon the Marines lying in the fetid jungle.

Lieutenant Barkis had established a station at a village in the jungle. It was necessary now to run the dogs in relays to the beach.

The enemy mortars raised hob with the telephone lines all day. The dogs were surer than radio. They got through without being intercepted. And the artillery went up, and the half-tracks distributed ammunition, and food and water to the hungry, battle-worn Marines. A company of tanks was sent to the proper position, where they deployed in a line of steel. The enemy had made it hard for himself. The only argument he knew was being brought to bear.

The natives had long since departed from the ruined village. Most of the flimsy huts had been knocked down, some had burned. Others had been cleaned up and made fit for the dogs, and their handlers dug holes for themselves in the open.

Lieutenant Barkis toiled at a packing crate desk inside one of the huts. He had stopped up the chinks in the walls, hung a couple of blankets in the doorway, and dared to light his work with a shaded lantern turned low.

All night long the half-tracks clanked through the village, the tanks and the amphibious ducks. The jungle was full of their rolling and muttering. Dawn was not far off.

Sergeant Stranger, leaner and more saturnine looking than ever in the weird lamplight, slipped through the curtained doorway.

"Sir, Vance just came in from up front. You better talk to him."

Barkis frowned, glanced at the papers on his crude desk.

"Send him in."

Vance came in. He was thin—the kind of thinness popular among jungle fighters—and sallow. He took off his helmet and held it under his arm. His dark eyes burned in hollows above jutting cheekbones.

"My dog, Lieutenant. I sent him in over an hour and a half ago. He didn't come back, so I checked."

"Yes?"

"Vance's dog never got here," interpolated Sergeant Stranger.

BARKIS sat back from the packing case. He was tired. He hadn't realized how tired he was.

He said, "Maybe he got lost," and knew by their expressions they thought he was cracking up. "No," he corrected himself. "They don't get lost, do they?" He looked up sharply, forcing the weariness from his mind and body. "Let's have it."

Vance said, "My dog is dead, sir. Dead—like Alex was."

Barkis knitted his brows. "Killed—by another dog?"

"Yes, sir. I found him a quarter of a mile back along the trail. Bloody. Throat ripped out. Dead as hell, sir."

"The dog's message?"

"I delivered that myself, sir. Sorry about the delay—"

Barkis relaxed. "Very good. You'd better get some rest now. You'll need all you can get for tomorrow. Stranger . . ."

Vance, dismissed, left the hut. The saturnine sergeant hovered expectantly.

"Can you take one of the dogs forward?"

"Yes, sir. Grim is my dog."

"Grim, eh? Splendid name. Get Grim and stand by. We'll shove off in about ten minutes."

The sergeant looked a question, thought better of it, and went out. Barkis made a few aimless notations on the sheet before him, then turned the lantern even lower and blew out the flame. The wick smoldered acridly in the dark.

Grim was a massive German Shepherd. Stranger held him firmly on leash as they moved along beside the line of muttering vehicles going up to the front. The ground was soggy underfoot, the road itself had been churned to soupy mud. Barkis was silent, holding back his tiredness. Stranger moved at his side with the rhythmic preci-

sion of one of the machines that rolled slowly past them.

Stranger touched the lieutenant's arm.

"We turn off here, sir," he shouted above the thunder of many exhausts. "It's tricky, but it's a short cut. Up this way, Vance's dog—"

He bit off his words. Barkis knew the man loved his dogs. What had happened to Alex, and now to Vance's dog, had hurt him deeply.

Barkis risked a flicker of blue from his pocket torch, picked his way along a rotting log. The dog and man were lumpish shadows ahead. Away from the stench of burned gasoline, the smell of the jungle, raw, purulent, assailed his nostrils.

Low-voiced comments on the nature of their way came back from the man ahead. Barkis ducked vines, by-passed trees, clambered over logs, waded through mucky swamp and waist high grass. They broke into a small clearing.

"Right here," Stranger said, "is where Vance's dog got it."

They proceeded carefully. Barkis flashed his light at intervals. Stranger halted, and Grim commenced to whine.

"Here," said the sergeant.

BARKIS directed the wan beam of his torch upon the ground. The dog, a once powerful Doberman Pinscher, was horribly mangled, lay in a pool of its own blood.

"Is there a hound running wild on this island?" Stranger wanted to know.

Barkis shrugged. "He's bigger than ours. Look at those tracks."

The tracks covered the area of a man's palm. A giant dog. A dog that roamed ghostlike through the night, and mangled for the sheer joy of mangling.

"A dog like that," said Stranger, "would attack a man."

"A dog like that—could," agreed Barkis. He loosened his pistol in its holster. "Grim knows he's a murderer, too."

The dog crouched close against its lean master, trembled and whined. The dim blue of the flash showed Grim's eyes wild and rolling.

"He's scared to death," said the sergeant. 'D'you suppose he—no, I guess it's Death that scares him. His buddy is dead, and he don't know how nor why."

Barkis thought there was something else in the dog's attitude—a deeper fear than the dread of the visible evidence of Death before them. He said nothing of his thoughts.

"Take him on, Stranger. I'm going to look around here. I'll be up before it gets light."

Stranger hesitated. "Do you think it's—safe, Lieutenant?"

Barkis' irritation was a direct product of his own uneasiness.

He said, "Grim may be needed up front, Sergeant."

"Very well, sir."

The saturnine man tugged at the shepherd's leash, spoke softly to the animal. Barkis stood alone, contemplating the eerie shadows. He regretted having sent the man and dog on their way, but he would not admit that he was more than a little nervous. He got down and inspected the alien tracks in the light of his torch.

The sound of desultory firing drifted down from the hills of Watinau. Occasionally, a star-shell winked into brilliance in the sky, too far away to cast even faint illumination into the clearing. A high rack of clouds concealed the moon. Barkis set off in the direction taken by the giant dog tracks, and somehow he felt cold, as if the night had turned abruptly chill.

A hundred yards from the dead dog, the tracks vanished into the trickle of a stream. Flash his light here and there as he might, Barkis discovered no further trace of them. He nodded in recognition of this evidence.

"Smart," he told himself. "Smart as a man to lose his tracks like that."

He pocketed the flash and picked his way back to the murdered dog. Orienting himself, he continued in the trail of Sergeant Stranger and Grim.

Whether it was a slight sound that warned him, or some sixth sense that functioned without his conscious volition, Barkis was not sure. He brought himself to an abrupt halt, stood listening, pistol in hand. The gloom was impenetrable. An army of Japs might lie hidden a dozen steps away.

A shadow reared at his feet, and Barkis' breath jammed in his throat. He thrust himself backward, fending off with his left arm the massive, shaggy bulk that hurtled upon him. The collision knocked the breath from him, and his perceptions registered nothing but hair, hot breath, and glittering eyes.

Barkis struck the stony ground on his side, felt the crushing penetration of fangs upon the muscles of his arm. Something set up a deafening of concussions. He realized it was the pistol in his other hand. The weapon was thrust into the beast's shaggy midriff.

Barkis felt claws rake his body, and the animal vaulted over him, crashed into the jungle. Far away, a thin crackle of rifle fire rippled on the night. Barkis got painfully to his feet, nursing his injured arm.

He felt light-headed and hazy. He thought dreamily of the nearby stream, and desire for running water obsessed him.

"Wash the wound," he told himself. "Wash first, then bind it."

His way crossed the stream. Running water tinkled at his feet. He plunged forward.

"TAKE it easy, Lieutenant. Everything's okay."

Barkis was soaked. He had passed out and fallen in the water. His wounded arm was bandaged and Sergeant Stranger knelt beside him. The sky was streaked with a gutty grayness. Grim cowered beside a log, whimpering. The dog's thin flanks heaved desperately.

Barkis touched his throbbing head. "Lucky for me you came back," he said.

Stranger said, "I heard the shooting and guessed what was up. You were lying half in and half out of the water."

Barkis lifted his head, remembering.

"The dog," he said breathlessly, "jumped at me out of the dark. Fastened on my arm. I shot it four, five times, the muzzle pressed into its belly."

"I'd like to see that dog," Stranger offered, "I sure would. Must be a monster."

Barkis got shakily to his feet and led the way.

"It was about here. See where the ground is dug up? I landed there." He stooped and picked up a brass cartridge. "You'll find a couple more of these around here. He jumped over me and—"

Barkis looked around for a sprawled shape. The dawn light was clear and gray, but it showed no sign of the alien dog. Nor, due to the stony nature of the ground, were there tracks. A haunted expression came into Barkis' eyes. He cast about in widening circles.

"I'm sure I got him," he muttered. "Point blank, four, five shots."

Abruptly, he came back to the scene of the skirmish.

"No blood. My sleeve soaked up mine, but that beast should have showered blood like a lawn sprinkler."

He grew aware of a poignant throbbing in his arm. Sickness and dizziness assailed him.

"Let's get on back to the sick bay, Lieutenant," Stranger put in anxiously. "That arm is in a bad way."

A mellow thundering commenced on their left. The noise crescendoed, swept around to the right.

"It's started," Barkis said bleakly.

"That will pound 'em out of their holes," agreed Stranger.

Barkis swayed. The sergeant supported him. Grim suddenly howled, broke away, and bolted down the path. Stranger slitted his eyes.

"Now I wonder—"

The roar of the barrage struck a pitch of angry thunder and continued without remitting.

"PLASMA, this guy says," Barkis told Stranger after a brief session with medical corpsmen. "They got plasma on the brain. I told them to save it for the guys who will really need it."

Stranger's saturnine features tightened.

"It might not have been a bad idea, Lieutenant. There's shock with a wound like that. How y'feel?"

"I'm all right," gruffly. Barkis pondered. "Burns, though. Like fire. Maybe infection. But the sulfa will take care of that. The M. O. said I'll have to go when they take out the wounded. Right now, I'm supposed to sleep."

He held the bandaged arm in his good

hand. His eyes were red-rimmed and a flush suffused the stubbled flesh of his cheeks.

The wounded arm burned, and he couldn't sleep. He stumbled out of his quarters in midafternoon and went to the dog compound. The guns still rumbled among the hills of Watinau. Trucks grumbled in a ceaseless line from the front, bringing in wounded, returning with ammunition for the hungry, tireless guns.

The dogs sounded an uproar as he approached. He frowned. The chorus of yelps and howls was distinctly contrary to their training. Handlers scurried. Barkis sought out Sergeant Stranger. The sergeant was consulting with Hanocek about the care of a wounded dog.

"I can't figure what's got into the dogs," Stranger told Barkis. "They've been skittish and uneasy all day. Now this." He waved his hand.

Barkis frowned toward the dog hut.

"Maybe I'd better look in—"

Stranger's hand on his good arm restrained him.

"No, sir. Don't do that!" The sergeant's tone was imperative. A curious commingling of expression struggled across his lean features. "The boys will square 'em away. The lieutenant better go back and rest that arm some more."

Barkis looked down at the bandage. A little red had seeped through, staining the white gauze. The wound burned with an excruciating fire that swirled the length of his arm, ignited his brain, made him faint and dizzy.

"Maybe I better. But don't hesitate to call on me if I'm needed."

He lurched in the direction of his quarters. The yelping and howling of the dogs subsided, whimpered into silence.

Barkis halted outside the blanket-hung doorway of his hut. Corporeal fear shook his body as with an ague. He sweated. The very hut was a hulk of leering menace, and he was afraid to enter.

He struggled with the unknown sensation, reflecting feverishly on the curious reaction of sulfa drugs. Only the drug could have hurled him to this nadir of terror. It was like a claustrophobia, forcing him to stay in the open. He resolved he would not be bested by the physical reaction of the drug, pushed reluctant limbs forward, into the hut.

A man sat in Barkis' folding chair at the crude desk. His dungarees were torn and muddy. He had laid aside his steel helmet, and his sparse, blond hair stood up atop a narrow, ascetically moulded skull.

"Father Murphy!" The name caught like a dried crust in Barkis' throat.

The chaplain smiled tiredly.

"Hello, Barkis. I just got back this morning from the front. Your sergeant told me you had been hurt. Is there anything I can do?"

Barkis found it impossible to control his impulses. The hot throbbing in his arm sent waves of delectable giddiness dashing over his brain. He was angry, resentful, and afraid.

"There's nothing you can do for me. I'm not dead yet."

The older man did not alter his serene expression.

"That wasn't quite what I meant, lad. You will be leaving Watinau as soon as a ship comes to evacuate the wounded. I might—"

Barkis cut him off bitterly. "There is something you can do. You can get out of here and let me sleep."

Father Murphy's eyelids drooped. Stern pity possessed his gaunt, gentle features. He got up, fingering his helmet, and moved toward the door.

Barkis did not realize that he was glaring. He backed across the room, avoiding physical contact with the chaplain. After the man had gone, Barkis stared morosely at the curtained doorway, fighting an inward battle of revulsion and shame.

THE guns still thundered on the following day, and a trickle of wounded came down from the hills of Watinau.

"Like blasting rattlesnakes out of their dens," Stranger remarked to Barkis. "It takes time and energy."

He stared bleakly into the officer's swollen, feverish face.

Barkis croaked, "How are the dogs standing up?"

"Lost two more last night," Stranger said laconically. His glance sharpened with a predatory look. "The big . . . dog got 'em.

Got a man, too. At least, that's what I heard."

Barkis wrenched his head around. His brain felt puffed within his skull. The sergeant's saturnine features were void of expression. His eyes looked like peeled onions.

"A man?" Barkis parrotted.

"We had a good moon last night," Stranger went on flatly. "I saw the beast, sneaking along the edge of the dog compound. It was after I found my two murdered dogs. The animals were kicking up a fuss, y'see. The thing looked more like a timber wolf than a dog. It was monstrous, had heavy, black fur."

Barkis could not look at him. "Are you sure? This isn't the place for wolves."

"You can never be sure of what you see by moonlight," Stranger told him. "I just had a glimpse. He skulked off into the shadows."

Barkis' breath seemed on the verge of exploding in his lungs.

"Black, you say? Maybe twice the size of—of Grim?"

"Or bigger," the sergeant agreed without emphasis. "Only—I'm not sure. I think I saw him after that. I looked around, y'see."

Barkis' eyes swiveled toward the sergeant, slipped restlessly aside.

"Not again?"

"I said I just think I saw him. Or maybe it was a different one. I've seen wolves in my time, and I can recognize the breed. This one was smaller, lighter colored—sort of gray—and he limped."

"I think I'd better lie down," Barkis faltered. "My arm's giving me the devil."

"He limped," Stranger persisted, "and I'm sure he was lighter colored. I saw him plain in the moonlight, maybe for five or ten seconds. He wasn't so wary as the other one." The sergeant's eyes were chips of bright steel. "The second one sniffed around where the other had been. Then he took off, like he was following tracks, nose to the ground."

He went away then, and Barkis cowered in his blankets, sweating with the fever in his blood.

Sergeant Stranger had a long talk with Father Murphy. The chaplain looked worried and puzzled. Stranger's thin jaws worked. The tone of his voice, husky, whispered, carried urgency and conviction.

"I'm a dog man, Father. I've worked with the creatures all my life. I know dogs maybe better than I know men. Sometimes I reckon I respect 'em more. I was five years in the Yukon country, training dogs. With my own eyes I saw a case of what I've just told you about. The Canadians called it *loup-garou.*"

Father Murphy looked harassed.

"It's — it's unthinkable, Sergeant. It's blasphemous!"

Stranger looked bleak. "It was an accident, anyway. The fiend didn't intend it that way. But there may be more accidents of the same kind. Think of it then. What I'm suggesting is only a last resort, you might say. D'you think *I* want to do it? God knows I'll try everything else first. Me, I know dogs. You know men. Between us, we might figger something."

The chaplain nodded somberly. "There are ways. I have never been called upon to use them. One wouldn't be—not in this supposedly enlightened era. I'll have to study somewhat. We can't afford—"

"To make a mistake," Stranger finished for him. "But in the Yukon, about that *loup-garou,* we didn't make a mistake. We finished him."

BEHIND the saturnine man's opaque eyes glimmered a vision of graphic drama witnessed in the snowy woods of the North. He saw again the group of rough miners, mackinawed, toqued, stamping on ungainly snowshoes about a thing that lay dead in the snow, an evil thing that had lived beyond life, and now its blood was frozen to ruddy cake in the brittle cold.

Stranger fumbled in his dungaree jacket, withdrew a photographic contact print and tendered it to the chaplain.

"I had my suspicions yesterday. I heard him shoot, and it was patently impossible for him to miss. And there was no blood Not anywhere, except his sleeve was soaked with it. That was his own blood. Then Grim, my dog, bolted, and none of the other dogs could stand it when he came around. They sensed him, y'see—what he is. So I had a photographer take his pic-

ture at the dressing station. He didn't know anything about it."

Father Murphy frowned at the bit of glossy paper.

"It seems to be a picture of the dressing station, all right. Rather blurred and out of focus."

Stranger grinned tightly. "You think that is the photographer's fault? It was focussed on *him*, y'see. All you see there is background, and naturally it's out of focus."

Father Murphy looked up, puzzled. "I don't understand."

"Neither do I," shrugged the sergeant. "The photographer is still biting his nails over it. He wanted to throw the negative away. I persuaded him to make a print, anyway. It's the only proof I've got—so far."

"Proof? Man, I don't see how this proves anything!"

Stranger retrieved the print, tucked it into his pocket.

"That photographer is an expert in his line. He wouldn't miss a picture not six feet away. But he did miss. You can see that for yourself. Now, there's silver in the photographic emulsion—I dunno. Anyway, you've got to take my word for it, Father. About what I came for—"

Father Murphy sighed with trouble. "I have what you want," he said slowly. "Just a minute. I'll get it from my locker."

"You'll be ready to go with me tonight, Father—and bring the water?"

The chaplain nodded wearily. His eyes were bright with a new comprehension, an understanding of vileness that had not been his before.

"I would never have believed," he breathed.

Stranger went away from the chaplain's hut, concealing something under his jacket. He picked his way past clots of wounded about the medical station, directed his steps toward a repair depot where a group of greasy Marines were working on a disabled amtrac. One set down a glowing, gasoline blow-torch and rummaged in the amtrac's vitals. He reached back for the torch, and it was gone. He cursed without visible effect, regarded his mates with suspicion. An hour later, the blow-torch returned as mysteriously as it had disappeared.

Father Murphy went out to solace the wounded and to inquire into the situation in the hills. When he returned, he found the heavy base of a solid silver candlestick lying on his bunk. The upper half had been quite melted away. He wrapped the relic in a piece of chamois and put it soberly away in his locker.

LIEUTENANT BARKIS slept fitfully. Near midnight, he awoke in the darkness of his hut, racked with a scalding thirst. He got up and fumbled for his canteen. It was dry. There was water in the village, if he could just think where. It was brought up in tank-trailers from the distillery at the beach. He lurched out the blanketed door.

A full moon lighted the trodden earth of the village. Crisp shadows cut across areas of moonglow, breaking the landscape into a weird phantasmagoria of brilliance and blackness, like an infra-red photograph.

The night was breathless and still. The sounds of war were muted among the hills of Watinau. The jungle brooded under the moon, as if it had body and brain, and the moon-shadows were Circean convolutions of the latter, spawning vileness and evil in tangible thought.

Barkis did not hesitate in the open, though he seemed to have forgotten about the tank-trailers. His thirst did not call to drink. It was a sensation of his whole body, a singing flame that rippled ecstatically from nerve end to nerve end. The air held for him the promise of a new and keener quality of living. He savored it, cocked his ears to the infinitesimal sounds of the jungle. He heard the purl of running water, and the melody of it was a lure. He thrust his way into the jungle, almost running in his hurry.

A hundred feet from the edge of the village, the little creek that came down from the hills of Watinau broadened into a pool. The shadows hid riffles above and below the pool, but here the moonlight was bright and barred with the shadow of vines and creepers.

At this pool the villagers had got their water for cooking and drinking; here they had washed their lava-lavas and splashed the silvery drops upon their supple,

brown hides, had dived and swum in their eternal playtime.

The surface of the pool turned sluggishly in the moonlight; in the shadows, the riffles chuckled rhythmic melody as old as the earth is old, a hymn of living and laughter unwrit in the books of eld, and always fresh to the listening ear.

The place was elemental in the sight and the sound and the smell of it. Barkis breathed the air in delighted gulps, plunged suddenly into the pool, unaware of the helmeted pair who crouched among the vines on the far bank, their drab-dappled combat suits blending with the camouflage of night.

It was something Barkis did not fully understand, this ecstasy that transformed him. Last night it had happened, while the moon was riding high. Then he had answered the call through the prompting of instinct. Tonight was the repetition of experience, and the cool waters washed the fever from his blood, sharpened his senses to supernormal keenness, and brought about . . . that other change.

Fierce strength throbbed in Barkis' limbs, suddenly lean and steel-thewed. His chest labored and deepened; his flanks grew thinner. He felt the tingling growth of his ears, the fullness of feeling as the bony structure of his skull lengthened and metamorphosed into a lupine muzzle. He paddled to shore, drew his wolfish body upon the land, and squatted on his haunches. He lifted his gray-furred muzzle to the moon, the wolf that was Barkis did this, and he sobbed the anguished joy of his being to that cold luminary.

Full-throated, piercing, the call of the pack lifted and quavered, a sound of pleasure and of pain, of savage joy and sorrowing evil. In the village, men awakened and felt afraid. Some who knew of such things listened and shook their heads.

"Wolves on Watinau? What a dream!" And they went back to sleep.

The two across the pool shivered where they knelt. Father Murphy made the sign of the cross and murmured in Latin. Saturnine Sergeant Stranger clutched grimly the stock of his carbine and peered with burning eyes through a shield of vines at the thing that had once been a man.

Far into the hills of Watinau knifed that throbbing call, and one there in a den of rocks pricked up his ears and listened. The hair rose upon the listener's shaggy back. Black lips writhed hatefully away from wolfish fangs. The devil dog of Watinau padded swifty into the junge.

The thing that had been Barkis harkened a moment upon the vanishing echo of his own cry. The jungle held its breath and quaked silently in fear of the unknown. And the wolf licked its chops with a pink slab of tongue, skulked into an alleyway of shadow.

SERGEANT STRANGER relaxed. "Now are you convinced, Father?"

"Irrevocably!" The chaplain repressed further shuddering. He spoke in a breathless whisper. "Poor devil!"

"He enjoys his hellish existence," Sergeant Stranger vouchsafed. "It's still new to him. It was only night before last that he was bitten by the werewolf. The infection must have been immediate. It is said that it is." He pondered darkly. "He hates all things human, now. Some night, unless we interfere, he will run away into the jungle and never come back. Right now he's held by ties of habit and discipline. These won't dissolve easily."

"It explains his actions when I stopped by his hut," the chaplain mused. "Are you sure he will come back here for the change at dawn?"

"This was where I first saw him. When he changed from a wolf into a man. He went directly back to his hut then. When I talked to him that morning, I hinted pretty strong, but I didn't tell him all I had seen.

"This pool has associations. If I'm not mistaken, he identifies this spot with the change, and we can almost count on his coming back. Any running water will do, of course. He could change any place between the beach and the hills. But maybe he doesn't know that. The chances are he will come right here."

Father Murphy nodded. "Your reasoning is sound. Perhaps if I keep watch, you can get a little sleep while we wait."

Stranger argued before giving in reluctantly. He recognized that there were certain things troubling the soul of the priest, and these things required contemplation

for a readjustment of values. Several hours later, Stranger came awake at the chaplain's touch on his shoulder.

"He's here," breathed Father Murphy.

Stranger peered through the screen of vines. The moonlight had angled sharply while he slept. Now it lighted the opposite bank in detail. It seemed deserted to the casual glance, but sharp scrutiny discerned the deeper blot among the shadows, the glint of ferocious eyes watching the pool with an intentness that matched their own. Stranger's grip crushed upon the chaplain's arm.

BARKIS had slaked his thirst. A soldier's blood is hot, strong, and vital. The wolf loped easily, reveling in that strength and vitality which had become his. Whether the soldier had been friend or foe had not concerned him. He had not noticed; for both were Man to the wolf-kind, and hated. He had drenched his muzzle in blood, and dawn now crept across the sea. A dim instinct warned him of the fatal sun, urged speed into the lean, gray flanks. And true to Stranger's prediction, he was bent upon return to the place his mind associated with the change.

So the wolf came again to the village, and circling, approached the pool.

He stopped, one paw upraised. Suspicion flamed in the narrowed eyes, Barkis' own, human eyes in the head of the wolf. He tested the gentle dawn wind with his nostrils, but it came off the village and brought him the scent only of oil, sleeping men, and gasoline. He hunkered down in the path and stared hypnotically at the pallid surface of the pool a few yards ahead. Bellywise, he crept forward, tense and alert.

Out of the shadows lunged the devil dog of Watinau, muzzle frozen in a hideous grimace. Barkis' own fangs bared and snapped. He rolled, sprang to his feet, tumbled with the shock of the beast's assault. In and out of the shadows they writhed, horribly silent save for the scuffing of clawed feet, the clashing of fangs.

They were two things out of nightmare, invincible to Nature, each vulnerable only to the other, their hatreds steeped in the brew of Hell. The fires of the Pit flamed in their savage eyes; their satanic souls were curdled with the acids of evil. The black beast's strength and cunning was matched by the litheness and man-courage of the gray one, his spirit not yet polluted in the full, revolting vileness of his condition.

They fought while the stars paled in the sky, while the moon grew dim and effaced itself, while streamers of dawn-light stole forth and laced a web to trap the eastern stars. Rigid, spellbound, the two across the pool observed the unfolding of the drama, watched the grim race of mortal combat against the deadly rising of the sun.

Then the gray wolf's fangs found the favored spot, tore with bloody exultation. And the black wolf died, and dwindled, and changed. The hair of its body melted, the form of its bones shifted. The body became as that of a man, and the gray wolf worried it, growled, and tore it some more.

The unknown was not to be identified by age or race. Perhaps the corpse was all that remained of a hell-pacted acolyte of some obscure Shinto temple. He might even have been Polynesian, or a white man—the cursed product of some ancient shipwreck. Knowledge of the European origin of the werewolf later inclined Stranger's opinion to this latter view. Who could tell for sure, now that he had died? Who knew how long he had suffered thus, or from whence he came? Death leveleth all things, even the accursed and the unholy.

Sergeant Stranger stood erect across the pool. A full canteen, unstoppered, hurtled from his hand, splashed into the water. The sound was shockingly loud in the dawn-quiet. The gray wolf whirled, snarling.

"Barkis!" shouted the sergeant. "I have just thrown holy water into the pool! The water is spoiled for you." He lifted his carbine and aimed. "Don't move from where you are. There's a silver bullet in this gun. It will split your head wide open if you so much as stir! Do you understand?" He hurled exhortation to the priest. "Now, Father!"

He could not take his eyes from the wolf to see what the chaplain was doing, but he heard the cadenced murmur of Latin invocation. Stranger's brain was in turmoil. Would the exorcism prevail? Time was pitifully short. The day brightened from

moment to moment. At the first touch of the sun, the wolf would die horribly. More horrible still, a virtuous soul would be hurled to eternal damnation. Dared he act, if the exorcism failed?

The gray wolf rumbled a dirge of hatred and fear. Its tongue lolled. Sweat came out on Stranger's forehead. The palm of his hand was slippery on the carbine stock. Father Murphy faltered in his droning ritual.

"Useless!" he whispered. "And there is the sun."

INDEED, the east had flushed, and a roseate glow tipped the tallest trees of the jungle. The gray wolf whimpered, shifted its glance from the dawn-hued treetops to the pool that had become as a bath of acid for him.

Across the pool, Sergeant Stranger saw the human eyes of the beast, saw the pain and the suffering and the tears in them. He squeezed gently upon the trigger. The world of the gray wolf obliterated itself in sound and flame.

"I didn't want to do it," Stranger repeated numbly, as they stood over the bodies. "God knows I didn't want to do it!"

Mingled expressions of shock and horror struggled across his saturnine features. He and the priest looked down upon the prostrate dead, the one grimacing still with hideous hate, the other calmly reposed, smiling almost, with a small, blue hole in the middle of his forehead. Barkis had scarcely bled where the silver bullet entered his brain.

Father Murphy dropped to one knee, performed his offices. The dead man was at rest.

"Silver once doomed a Life," the priest said, rising. "Thirty pieces of silver. In compensation of this taint, it was given the power in this wise to save from damnation. He knows now what he escaped."

Stranger's glance was bleak. "I had to do it, didn't I, Father? I gave him back the soul that had been stolen from him, didn't I? Do you think they will take that into consideration?"

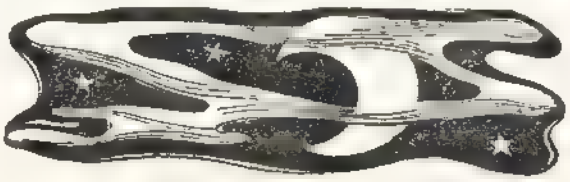
Father Murphy's face was transfigured by understanding and compassion.

"It was not murder, lad, and *they* need never know." He drew the sergeant's heavy jungle knife, like thousands more issued to jungle fighters, from its sheath on Stranger's hip and dipped its blade in the blood of the unknown. He pressed the cold fingers of Lieutenant Barkis around the leathern haft and came erect. For the first time since Sergeant Stranger had sought his aid, the chaplain's eyes were calm and untroubled.

Father Murphy spoke gently. "Perhaps a Japanese patrol sneaked through our lines. Who can say this dead fellow is not a Jap, that his rags are not the remains of a uniform? Barkis died a hero when he attacked single-handed, with only a knife. Unfortunately, his killer escaped."

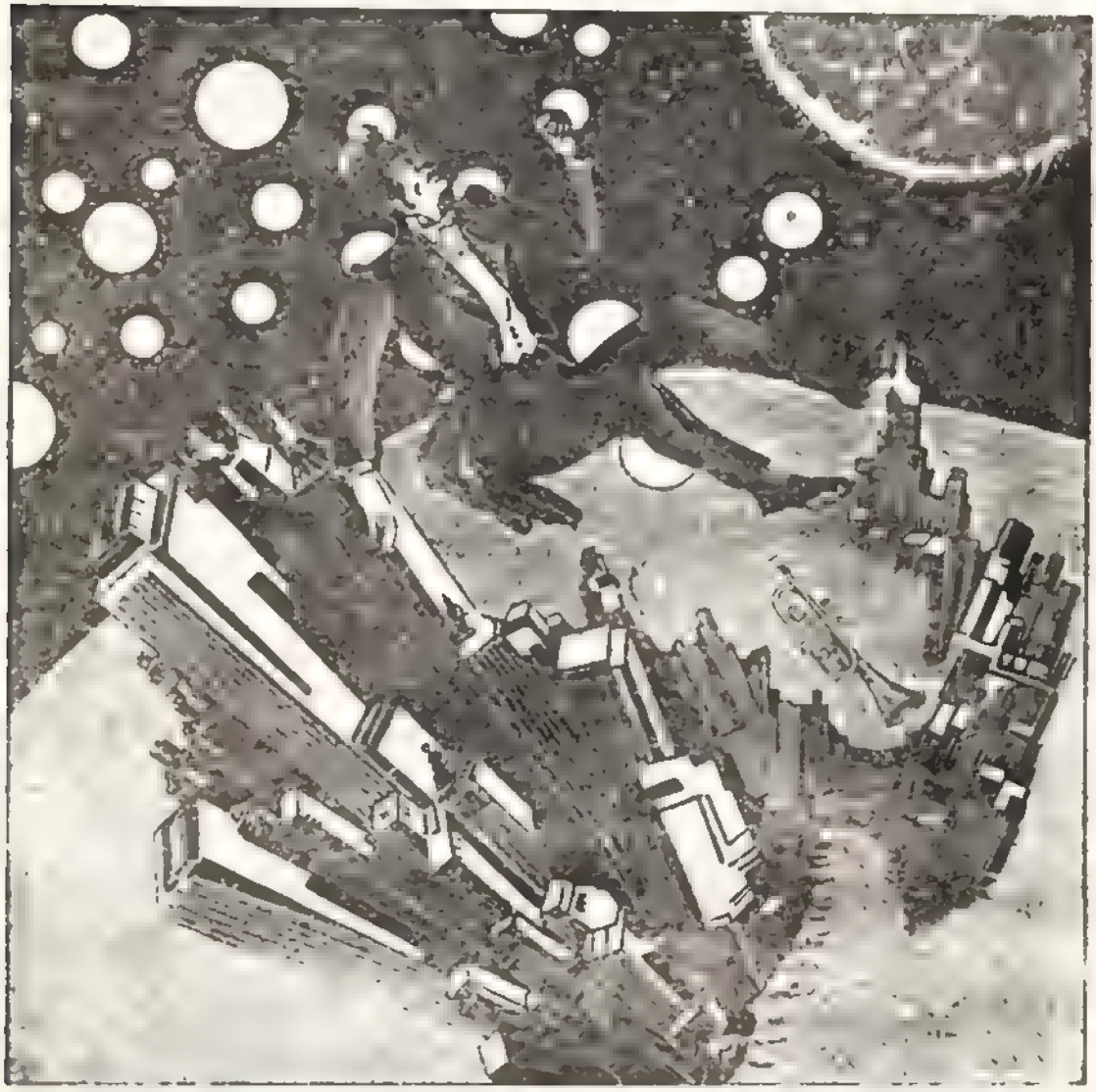
The slope went out of Stranger's thin shoulders. He lifted his stubbled jaw and met the chaplain's unfaltering glance.

The tableau was set. Already he heard the sound of men approaching cautiously from the village to investigate. The shot had been loud in the morning stillness. Naturally, there would be questions. And answers, too, just as naturally. Adequate answers. Little suspicion attends violent death, where there is a war going on.



One Way To Mars

By ***ROBERT BLOCH***



Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

JOE GIBSON was higher than hell and he didn't know where he was and he didn't care as long as the bar was in front of him and he was laughing and somebody was singing in a sad voice very far away and he said sure he'd have another one and then—

There was this character in the brown overcoat.

He was an odd little whack and he kept

"You need to get away from it all," said the little man. "How about a ticket to Mars?"

his pockets and his collar turned up and his hat-brim pulled down low like an extra in a gangster movie.

The whack was talking to him but it took a minute before the words reached him and made sense.

"Trouble with you, friend, you need a little vacation," said the whack. "Sort of get away from it all."

"Sure, sure," said Gibson, trying to find his glass. It was lost down there somewhere in the fog.

"I've been watching you, friend," said the whack. "Said to myself, there's a man with trouble. There's a man who needs to get out of all this. You look lost, friend."

"Sure," said Gibson. "Sure. I'm a lost soul. Will you have a drink or kindly get the hell out of here?"

The little whack didn't pay any attention. He went right on talking in an earnest voice. A Dutch uncle.

"I'm with the Ace Travel Bureau, buddy. How'd you like to buy a ticket?"

"Where to?" asked Gibson, as if he gave a damn.

The whack in the brown overcoat shrugged.

"How about a ticket to Mars?" he asked.

Gibson let that one sink in for a minute. Then he grinned.

"Mars, eh? How much it cost me?"

"Oh, I don't know. Make it cheap for you. Let's say $2.88."

"$2.88 to Mars? Sounds very reasonable." Gibson paused. "Is this a round trip or just one way?"

The whack coughed apologetically.

"Uh—one way. You see, we haven't been able to figure out how to make a return trip yet."

"Bet you don't sell many tickets," said Gibson.

"We have our customers," said the character in the overcoat. "You interested?"

"I don't think so." Gibson found the glass, drew it up through the fog and swallowed the scotch with a shudder.

"You will be interested some other time, perhaps?" coaxed the whack.

"Listen, you—" said Gibson, suddenly.

"I've had you on my list for quite a while, friend," the whack mumbled, not noticing how Gibson's fist closed around the glass in his hand. "I know we'll do business sooner or later."

"How about right now?" said Gibson, softly.

He drew his hand back, intending to smash the whack in the face. He was set for it, his body began to pivot, and he braced himself for the moment when the blow would land solid, hard.

And then he followed his fist and the fist shot out, out past the stars and into the darkness beyond. Joe Gibson went with it and fell through the darkness as it tunnelled down . . . deep down . . .

2

"JEEZ what a beaut you had last night," said Maxie, stirring the cup before he placed it to Joe Gibson's lips. "Were you stinko but completely."

"Shut up," said Gleason.

"The face on the bar room floor. Out cold," said Maxie, forcing the contents of the cup down Gibson's unwilling throat.

"Forget it," said Gibson, as soon as he could talk.

Maxie shrugged.

"OK pal," he said. "I'll forget it. You're riding high. I line you up a five hundred a week deal with the hottest name combo in the business and what do you do? Go out and plaster yourself over half the brass rails in town and pass out in front of the guy who does the pillar for *Billboard*. You tell me to forget it. So I'm willing to forget everything—and that includes you."

Gibson sat up in bed. He moved very quickly for a man with a hangover.

"No, Maxie," he said. "I didn't mean it. Honest I didn't. I'm sorry. And I never would of socked the guy if he hadn't gone and cracked wise about this Mars stuff. I'm just standing and minding my own business when he ups with his wise lip about a trip. So I let him have it and went out on my face."

Maxie stared at him.

"I saw it happen, Joe," he murmured. "You're standing at the bar with nobody within ten feet of you on either side. You start mumbling to yourself, and then you turn around and haul off and go down for the count. Hitting air."

"But the whack in the brown overcoat—" Gibson began.

"I didn't see any whack in a brown overcoat," said Maxie, slowly. "All I see is a whack named Joe Gibson doing a nose-dive with a snootful."

Gibson sighed. "That's how it was?"

"That's how it was."

"I had the snakes," Joe Gibson shuddered.

Maxie sat down on the bed.

"Remember the old days, Joe?" he asked. "You was a punk from K. C. when I picked you out of the Rialto pit. Playing non-union dates at stags. I spotted you, got you the bookings. Made you work. Brought out your style."

"Where's your violin?" asked Gibson. "You need soft music for this line."

"I'm not handing you a line," said Maxie. "I'm just telling you."

"What you telling me?" Joe Gibson sat straight up and he brushed Maxie's hand off his shoulder. "So all right. You picked me up in the gutter and you made a big horn out of me. Not a side man, a big horn. Big enough for Goodman, Shaw, Miller, anybody.

"Like hell you did! It's me, Joe Gibson—I'm the guy who blows his heart out through the tube. You know a good thing when you see it so all right, you build me up. But you get your ten per cent out of it, don't you? I'm the musician. You're just the flesh peddler."

Maxie didn't move. His smile was slow and sad.

"It's not that, Joe," he sighed. "I don't want the credit. You was a good kid. You worked hard. But not any more."

He rose. "I don't figure it," he said. "First there's the lush act you pulled in Scranton, when you got stinko on the stand. And the way you run out on that combo I set for the Rainbow Room, almost. And the time I hauled you out of the jam in Chi when you didn't show for the Decca recordings.

"Between that wrongo babe of yours and the rotgut you're getting a pretty good reputation for yourself, huh? Joe Gibson, one of the best boys on trumpet in the business. But don't buy him! Because he's also one of the best boys on blondes and bourbon."

Joe Gibson was sitting almost bent double. His head hung in his lap and he sobbed.

"Awright," said Maxie. "I don't know what's got into you. I don't know what you're scared of. Maybe you'll snap out of it all of a sudden. Don't make me promises, though.

"I'm gonna see what I can do. Maybe I can square that booking. The rest is up to you. Get some rest. Call you tomorrow."

Maxie went out.

Joe Gibson slid back under the covers. His faced gradually stopped twitching. He prepared to sleep.

The phone rang.

Joe Gibson slid one hand over to the bedside cradle phone.

"Hello," said a familiar voice. Gibson couldn't place it so he grunted softly.

"I was just wondering," said the voice, "about our little talk last night. Made up your mind yet about that trip to Mars?"

Joe Gibson slammed the receiver down with a bang. His head disappeared under the covers and he lay shuddering and sobbing for a long time.

3

OPENING night was solid.

It had to be. The week before it was just pure hell. Maxie had worked like a dog sewing the contract up again. Joe Gibson sweated the alcohol out of his system in rehearsal.

Now he sat on the bandstand waiting for the downbeat and he had the trumpet poised in his lap. He knew it was all right.

There was just one thing wrong. His eyes. Joe Gibson's eyes hurt him. They hurt him because of all the squinting he'd done for the past week. Squinting at faces in crowds, faces he saw from bus tops or through windows.

Joe Gibson was looking for somebody. A little whack in a brown overcoat. He was afraid of seeing him. And somehow he was more afraid because he *didn't* see him.

Now he gazed down at the dim dance floor, blinded by the harsh spot from overhead, and he squinted again.

So his eyes hurt, and all the time he kept

kidding himself that it was all right, he was all right, this was just another opening—

But he prayed for the moment when he'd put the horn to his lips, and blow out all the fear and the worry, blow out the thought of squinting and the thoughts that lay behind the squinting.

The hands holding the trumpet trembled and little beads of sweat dropped along the sides of the horn.

One last hasty glimpse of the tables bordering the dance floor. No brown overcoat.

Downbeat.

Joe Gibson raised his horn.

Then it *was* all right for sure.

The crowd was dancing. Joe Gibson didn't even bother to look for the whack any more. His eyes were closed. He was out of this world. Riding for the stars on a trumpet, sweeping up with a boogie beat.

It was hot, solid; something to hang onto. He twisted each note, reluctant to let it go. He wanted a solo ride, wanted to play his horn, keep his eyes closed, keep his brain closed to everything except the sending sound. Out of this world.

He was all right at last. Completely grooved through each number until intermission.

Then Joe Gibson sat back after the signature and realized for the first time that his shirt and dickey were wringing wet and his new tux was ripped under the left arm. He had been too solid to notice. And now the other boys were leaving the stand for a smoke and the crowd drifted off the dance floor.

Joe Gibson got up. He saw Maxie waiting for him over behind the bandstand. He tucked his horn into the case and stood up straight, took a quick stride to the steps behind the stand.

He lanced out at the deserted floor. The deserted floor that was not *quite* deserted.

A brown blur spun out there beyond the glare of the lights. A solitary figure weaved into a solo dance of its own. And the figure whirled up to the platform in a strutting glide, and Joe Gibson saw the face under the pulled-down hat brim and then he heard the words rustle up.

"Enjoyed your playing. You're almost ready for your Mars' trip now, I believe."

Joe Gibson cleared the bandstand in a leap. He wasn't quite fast enough. The brown overcoat bobbed off between the tables. Nobody seemed to notice it at all.

But almost everybody saw Joe Gibson jump from the bandstand and run screaming out of the room into the streets beyond.

4

JOE was all right as long as Max stayed in the room with him but then the croaker told him to step outside and he began to talk to Joe alone.

The croaker was a smooth soft-speaking guy and he seemed to know his business. Maxie said he was the best psychiatrist in the racket and Maxie knew about those things.

But now Maxie had stepped out and Joe was lying down on the couch with a light shining in his eyes, and the croaker was telling him to relax, take it easy, stop thinking and just say whatever popped into his head.

It reminded Joe too much of those gangster pictures where they give a guy the third degree. But at that it was better to lie down than to have the croaker tapping him on the knee and making him stretch out his arms with his eyes closed. That was supposed to test your reflexes, but Joe Gibson didn't give a damn about his reflexes. He was afraid of the man in the brown overcoat. The man he couldn't catch, the man he couldn't even see on the street the night he chased him out of the cafe and lost his job.

Joe began to explain this to the croaker, choosing his words very carefully, because after all he didn't want this psychiatrist to think there was anything the matter with him *really*.

It wasn't as if he heard voices, or stuff like that. There was nothing wrong with him except seeing that whack.

But the croaker kept asking questions, and pretty soon he had Joe admitting all kinds of stuff—not so much admitting as remembering. Dizzy ideas he had when he was a kid. Screwy things.

Like when he used to sneak off to sit

in the coal cellar after his old man had a fight with his old lady. He'd fall asleep down in the basement and dream that he wasn't in a coal cellar at all—that he wasn't really *anywhere*. There was no coal cellar in those dreams and no upstairs, either. No outside and no people. There was just the dark and Joe Gibson.

Joe told the croaker a lot of dizzy things like that. He could remember more and more as he lay there under the lamp. He told about getting his first horn and practicing indoors all the time so he wouldn't have to play with the gang outside.

He told about getting his first job and the way he'd run off without collecting his dough from the stick, and then he got to telling how he loved music—particularly the kind where you didn't have to read notes but just played it out of your own head and it did something to you, the way liquor did.

Then Joe realized he was getting his story pretty close to *now*, and he would have to tell about the man in the brown overcoat and he didn't want to do that, so he talked louder and faster to keep the thoughts back but it didn't work, and then he was spitting it all out and the croaker was firing questions in a very low voice, and he said yes, he'd seen the man at the bar and no, he wasn't queer-looking and yes, he did have a face and the skin around the mouth was like crumpled tissue-paper.

Funny . . . Joe didn't know he remembered about the skin around the whack's mouth until the croaker asked him.

NOW it felt kind of good to get it off his chest. So he told all about it, what he said and what the guy said about the Ace Travel Bureau and the $2.88 ticket to Mars, one way only, and about the other customers the man said they got, and he told about passing out.

Then he explained about the phone call and the dance floor. Only he kept insisting to the croaker that he didn't have anything to drink this last time, and he saw the little whack in the brown overcoat just as plain, and he could hear his voice, so he wasn't—nuts.

The croaker smiled and said Joe was all right and then he called Maxie back and they stood talking together for a while in the next room and Joe couldn't catch anything of what they said.

The croaker came in again and showed him a telephone book. It was the Classified one, and he opened it up to where the travel bureaus were and there was no Ace Travel Bureau in the list.

That made Joe feel a little better until the croaker began to ask him what he knew about the planet Mars. Then he realized what the guy was driving at, and shut up like a clam. The croaker asked him what the number 288 meant to him and Joe played dumb like a fox.

So the croaker smiled and told him to get up and he should come back in a couple days when they checked the physical tests.

Maxie told Joe to run along to the hotel alone, he'd be up in a few minutes after he settled the bill with the psychiatrist.

So Joe got up and walked out.

THERE was a patient in the waiting room reading a National Geographic, but when Joe walked through, the patient put his magazine down and Joe saw the little man in the brown overcoat.

"I've got your ticket all made out," said the whack. "You can leave today if you like."

Joe didn't say anything. He just stood there, staring down at the crinkly crumpled skin around the whack's lips and the little eyes under the shadow of his hat brim. Joe looked at the brown overcoat with the stains on it, and the big ragged moth holes along the collar.

He took a deep breath and he could smell the coat and something else—something old and stale and sour.

So Joe knew he could see and hear and smell this thing and all the while the little guy was grinning up at him and then he reached into his pocket and Joe knew he was fumbling around for his ticket to Mars.

This time Joe was ready. He jumped him in a flash, and he felt his fingers close around something and choke and choke and everything turned red and black and back to red again and somebody was screaming, way off in the distance and it was Joe screaming but he didn't know that any more because he went out cold.

5

WHEN Joe Gibson woke up he was lying in bed again and he felt good. Very good.

At first he couldn't figure it out and then he remembered why. Because he'd jumped the whack, of course. He wondered if he'd killed him. He couldn't have or he would be in jail now, not in his hotel room.

Still, it was a good feeling. He wanted to celebrate.

Maxie came in. He didn't look as though he felt so good.

Joe began to tell him he was all right now, but Maxie kept mumbling something about the fit he'd thrown in the croaker's office.

Joe proved he wasn't crazy right then and there. He admitted he had thrown a fit and he didn't say anything about choking the whack in the brown overcoat.

"I think I'll get dressed and go out for a walk," Joe said.

He knew Maxie wouldn't like this, but he felt too good to care.

But Maxie didn't try to stop him. He said, "OK," and sat down on the bed and lit a cigar while Joe dressed. He stared at the carpet and frowned when Joe began to whistle.

"Joe," he said.

"Yeah?"

"You aren't gonna take a walk."

"Who says?"

"You got to take things easy."

"Sure. I am taking things easy. I'll be back early."

"No. That's not what I mean, Joe. You're going to rest up in bed. In a sanatorium."

"What the—"

"I been talking to the Doc. They're coming for you in half an hour. It's nothing to get excited about now, you'll be out again in—"

That's the way it was going to be. He understood the setup now.

Joe walked over to the bureau.

"Where are you going?" asked Maxie.

"Got to get my cigarettes. Don't worry. It's all right. I understand everything."

"After all, it's for your own good," said Maxie, still not looking at Joe.

"Of course it is," Joe said. He opened the drawer.

"No hard feelings," said Maxie.

"No hard feelings," said Joe.

He turned away from the bureau and shot Maxie twice through the stomach with the gun he'd pulled from the drawer.

6

JOE wasn't crazy and he'd never felt better in his life, or else he couldn't have figured it so perfect.

He went downstairs and checked out, paid his bill with the dough he found on Maxie, and grabbed a cab. If he could get over to Jersey in the supper rush, they'd never find him.

So he went to the station and got his ticket and ran for the 5:14 and made it just as the train started to pull out.

He walked down the aisle and laughed because he remembered that the little whack in the brown overcoat was dead. There was nothing to worry about now except this crowd, all these people. He wanted to get away for a while and think out his next move.

So he looked for the washroom at the end of the car and opened the door and walked in. The light wasn't working and it was dark in there, but Joe could see out of the window.

It took a minute for his eyes to focus right, but then he saw what was outside. Just a big black emptiness with stars sweeping past, glaring and winking.

Then the door opened, and Joe knew it was the conductor. But the conductor was wearing a brown overcoat and his hat had a pulled-down brim. A hand reached out for Joe's ticket.

He stared at it in the light from the stars, and read his name and the price and the destination—and then there was nothing for Joe Gibson to do but stand there and wait while he rushed on and on, out of this world.

The Inn Outside the World

By ***EDMOND HAMILTON***

MERRILL felt discouraged tonight, though not for himself. His despondency was for the old man in the next room of this dingy Balkan hotel, the thin, gray spectacled old man who was one of the four most important people in post-war Europe.

Carlus Guinard had come back from exile to lead a stricken nation out of its chaotic misery, and he was the only statesman who could do it. But, tonight, even Guinard had been so crushed by defeat that he had admitted his helplessness to hold back his people from the abyss.

The night over some parts of the world may indeed be a long, long night

Heading by BORIS DOLGOV

"Too much intolerance, too many old grudges, too many ambitious men," he said wearily to Merrill when his last conference of the day was over. "I fear it is hopeless."

Merrill was only an unimportant lieutenant, assigned by U. S. Military Intelligence to guard Guinard, but he and the old statesman had become friends in these last weeks.

"You're tired, sir," he had said, awkwardly encouraging. "Things won't look so black in the morning."

"I fear that the night over this part of Europe is to be a long, long night," murmured Guinard. His thin shoulders were sagging, his ordinarily twinkling, friendly eyes now dull and haggard.

He whispered, "Perhaps *they* could help me. It is against our laws, but—" Then, aware of the staring Merrill, he broke off. "Good night, Lieutenant."

Merrill had been worried and restless ever since. He liked and respected the world-famous old statesman, and was downcast by the other's defeat and despair. He knew what a herculean task the tired old man was attempting.

He went to the open window. Across the dark, bomb-shattered city out there moaned a chill wind. Away northward, the river glistened beneath the stars. Few lights had yet come back on in this land, though the war was over. Perhaps the lights would never come back, if Guinard failed?

What had the old man whispered, about "they" helping him? Something that was against the "laws"? Was Guinard planning a secret conference of some kind? Did he intend to slip out without his American bodyguard for that purpose?

Merrill felt sudden alarm. And it wasn't because he might lose his commission if he failed to guard the statesman. It was because he liked Guinard, and knew there were many out in that dark city who would assassinate him if they could. Guinard mustn't try to go out alone—

He went to Guinard's door and listened. And he heard a soft step inside the bedroom. It increased his apprehensions. Guinard had retired an hour before. Then he *was* trying to slip out secretly?

Merrill softly opened the door. What he saw was so unexpected and amazing that for a moment he just stood and stared.

Guinard stood, his back toward the American, in the center of the room. The old man was holding his watch above his head, and was fingering its heavy, jeweled case.

Had Guinard suddenly gone crazy from strain? It seemed so to Merrill. Yet there seemed sober purpose in Guinard's madness.

He'd noticed the old statesman's watch, before this. It was a curious, massive gold one, with a complex pattern of big jewels inset on its back.

Guinard was pressing the jewels, one after another, as he held the watch above his head. There was something so oddly suggestive of the ominous about it, that Merrill impulsively strode forward.

Guinard turned, startled, as Merrill reached his side. The old man yelled in sharp alarm.

"Get back, Lieutenant—don't—"

It all happened together. As he shouted, as Merrill reached him, from the upheld watch there dropped toward the two men a thin, wavering thread of blinding light.

It struck them and Merrill was dazed and blinded by a shock of force. It seemed to him that the floor beneath his feet vanished and that he was falling—

MERRILL did not lose consciousness. But the world seemed to disappear from around him as he plunged through bellowing backness. And then there was a sharp shock, and he was standing staggering on firm footing again.

But the hotel room was gone. The walls, the floor, the lights, had vanished as by witchcraft. The only thing remaining of all that was Carlus Guinard, whose thin arm he had been clutching.

"What—" choked Merrill. He couldn't form or speak more words than that one.

He was standing on grassy ground in a strange misty darkness. He was in the open air, but there was nothing to see. Nothing but a swirling mist through which filtered a faint green glow of light.

In that green glow, Guinard's thin face was close to him and was staring at him aghast.

"You came through with me!" Guinard

exclaimed, thunderstruck. "But this—it's never happened before. It's forbidden! You don't belong!"

"Guinard, what happened?" Merrill asked hoarsely. He looked wildly around the greenish, silent mists. A gruesome possibility shook him. "Was it an explosion? Are we—dead?"

"No, no!" the old statesman hastily denied. His face was a study in perplexity and anxiety. He seemed to ignore their surroundings entirely in his concentration on Merrill. "But you, Lieutenant—you should not be in this place. Had I known you were behind me—"

Then Guinard pulled himself together. "I shall have to take you to the others," he muttered distractedly. "It's all I can do now. And they will have to decide about you. If they don't understand—"

Distress came into his fine, haggard face at some thought that he did not voice, as he looked at Merrill.

The American could not understand. He wanted to say something but he couldn't. It was too sudden, too overwhelming.

He could only stand, staring stupidly about him. There was not a sound. Not any movement. Nothing but the curling, greenish mists whose cool, damp tendrils silently caressed their faces.

Guinard spoke urgently. "Lieutenant, you must understand me! You have inadvertently blundered into a place where you have no right to be, into the greatest and most closely guarded of secrets."

"What is this place?" Merrill asked hoarsely. "And how did we get here like that? *How?*"

Guinard spoke slowly, trying to penetrate his dazed mind. "Listen, Lieutenant. I must tell you, since you are here. This is not our Earth. This is another world."

Merrill's brain groped for understanding. "Another world? You mean, we're on one of the other planets?"

Guinard shook his gray head quickly. "No, not any planet of any universe known to science. A different universe, a different space-time continuum, entirely."

He looked baffled. "How shall I tell you? I am a statesman, not a physicist. I only know myself what Rodemos and Zyskyn and the others have told me.

"But listen. This world, in its other space-time frame, is always close to Earth, contiguous. Held there—what did Zyskyn say?—by inter-dimensional gravitation. Meshed forever with Earth, yet forever invisible and untouchable to Earthmen."

Merrill's throat was dry, but his heart began to beat faster. A little of this, at least, he could understand.

"I've read speculations on such an interlocking world," he said slowly. "But if that's what it is, how did we get here?"

Guinard showed his watch, with its curious pattern of big jewels on the back. "This brought us through, Lieutenant. It isn't a watch, though it looks like one. It is a compact instrument which can project enough force to thrust matter from Earth into this world."

THE old man talked rapidly. "This world, and the way into it, have been known for thousands of years. A scientist of ancient Atlantis found the way first. He passed the secret down to a chosen few of each generation."

"You mean"—Merrill struggled to comprehend—"you mean that in every stage of the world's history, there have been a few people who knew about *this?*"

And he made a wild gesture toward the unearthly landscape of solemn green mists that surrounded them.

Guinard's gray head bobbed. "Yes. A few of the greatest men in each age have been admitted into the secret and have been bequeathed the jeweled Signs which are the key to entrance here. I don't claim to be worthy of belonging to the world's greatest—but they thought me so and admitted me to their brotherhood."

He went on: "And all the members of our secret brotherhood, the greatest men of every age of Earth in past and future, come often into this world and gather at our meeting-place here."

Merrill was stunned. "You mean, men of the past, present and future *meet* in this world? But—"

Guinard reminded, "I told you that this world is outside Earth's space-time. A thousand years on Earth is but a few days here. Time is different."

He elaborated hastily. "Think of the

different ages of Earth as rooms along a corridor. You can't go from one room into another, from one age into another. But the occupants of all the rooms, of all the ages, can, if they have the key, come out and meet together in the corridor which is common to them all."

The old statesman's face was haggard as he concluded. "I came here tonight to seek help from the others of our brotherhood! Help that could enable me to pull my people and nation out of the abyss of anarchy. It's the only hope I have left, now. Always, it's been against the laws of our brotherhood to give each other such help. But now—"

He clutched Merrill's wrist and pulled him forward. "I can't delay here longer. You will have to come with me, even though you are not of the initiated."

Merrill found himself being hurried along by the old statesman, through the greenish mists. The grassy ground rolled in low swales, and they crossed little streams. They could see little but the enfolding mists, and there was no sign or sound of life.

The American felt as though he walked in a weird dream. His brain was staggering at the implications of what Guinard had just told him.

A SECRET brotherhood of the world's greatest men of all ages, an esoteric tradition that held the key to entrance into an alien world where all those men of many ages could mix and meet! Incredible, surely—

A clear voice called suddenly from close behind them. *"Est Guinard? Salve!"*

Guinard stopped, peering back into the mists. *"Salver frater! Quis est?"*

He murmured rapidly to Merrill. "We have to have some common language, of course. And we use Latin. Those who didn't know it, learned it. You know it?"

Merrill mumbled numbly, "I was a medical student before the war. But who—"

A figure emerged from the mists, overtaking them, and gave cheerful greeting.

"I hoped to see you this visit, Guinard," he said in rattling Latin. "How go things in that strange century of yours?"

"Not well, Ikhnaton," answered the old statesman. "It's why I've come. I've got to have help."

"Help? From us others?" repeated the man called Ikhnaton. "But you know that's impossible—"

He broke off suddenly, staring at Merrill. And Merrill in turn was gazing at him with even more wonder.

The man was young, with a thin, dark, intellectual face and luminous eyes. But his costume was outlandish. A linen cloak over a short tunic, a snake-crested gold fillet around his dark hair, a flaming disk hanging around his neck with the curious jeweled pattern of the Sign in its face.

"Ikhnaton, King of Egypt in the 15th century, B.C.," Guinard was explaining hurriedly. "Even if you don't know much history you must have heard of him."

Ikhnaton! Merrill stared unbelievingly. He'd heard of the Egyptian ruler who had been called the first great man in history, the reformer who had dreamed of universal brotherhood, back in time's dawn.

The Egyptian was frankly puzzled. "This man doesn't belong to us. Why did you bring him?"

"I didn't intend to, it was all a mistake," Guinard said hastily. "I'll explain when we reach the inn."

"There it is," Ikhnaton nodded ahead. "And it sounds like a good gathering this time. I hope so—last time I came, there was nobody here but Darwin and that stiff-necked Luther, and our argument never ended."

Warm, ruddy light glowed in the mists ahead, beckon to them. The light came from the oblong windows of a low, squat building.

It was a curious structure, this place they called "the inn." One-storied and built of dark stone, with timber gables, it looked dreamlike and unreal here in the silent mists. There were vineyards and gardens around it, Merrill saw.

Guinard opened the door. Ruddy light and warmth and the clamor of disputing voices struck their faces. Men hailed them in Latin.

"Ho, Guinard! Come in and listen to this! Zyskyn and old Socrates are at it again!"

Merrill stood and stared. Most of the inn was a big common-room, stone-flagged, with heavy, timbered walls. A huge fireplace at one side held a leaping blaze, and

its flickering light joined the reddish glow of torches in wall-sockets to illuminate the room.

THERE were long tables down the center. Grouped around the longest table, with their wine-cups standing unheeded upon it now, were the most motley group of men possible to imagine.

A tall Roman in bronze sat beside a man in super-modern zipper garments, a grave, bearded man in Elizabethan ruff and hose beside a withered, ancient Chinese, a merry fellow in the gaudy clothes of 16th Century France beside a stout, sober man in the drab brown of an American Colonial. At the far end of the table, silent and brooding, sat a man wrapped in dark robe and cowl-like hood, a man with a pale, young-old face.

All this fantastically variegated company, except that brooding, cowled listener, were eagerly joining into an argument. The two chief disputants were a handsome young man in a strange, glittering garment of woven metal and a bald, stocky Greek with shrewd eyes and a broken nose. Then, Merrill thought numbly, these two disputants were Zyskyn and—Socrates?

A fat jolly, moon-faced fellow in the costume of old Babylon waddled up to them. That he was the master of the inn, Merrill knew by the brimming wine-cups he was carrying as he greeted them.

"Welcome, friend Guinard!" he boomed. "And you too, Ikhnaton—but remember, no more arguments about theology."

His eyes fell on Merrill, behind them. And he stiffened. "But this man is not one of us!"

The booming words rang out so suddenly loud that they cut across the argument in the room, and all heads turned toward them.

The tall, bald, bleak-eyed Roman put down his goblet and strode up to them. He faced Merrill.

"How came you here?" he demanded sharply. "Do you have the Sign?"

"Wait, Caesar," begged Guinard urgently. "He doesn't have the Sign. But it's not his fault that he's here."

Caesar? Julius Caesar? Merrill could only stare at the Roman and then at the others.

The quiet, grave-faced man in Elizabethan costume interposed himself into the argument.

"You remember me, Guinard? Francis Bacon. May I ask where you and Ikhnaton found this man?"

The Egyptian king made a gesture of denial. "I never saw him until a few minutes ago."

"His name is Merrill, and he came with me," Carlus Guinard said rapidly. His voice rose with tension. "It's my fault that he's here. I was not careful enough about being alone when I came through, and he got caught in the force of the Sign and was swept with me."

Guinard hurried on. "If there's any blame for his coming, it attaches to my carelessness. But I was half-crazy tonight with worry. Back in my time, my people reel on the brink of anarchy and destruction. I have to save them. And so I have come to you others—for help."

The handsome young man in the queer flexible metal garment stared at him incredulously.

"For our help? You know we can't help you to do anything in your own time, Guinard!"

"Zyskyn is right," nodded Francis Bacon. "You surely should have known that, Guinard."

"But I *must* have help!" Guinard exclaimed feverishly. "Some of you are from times future to my own, and your greater science and wisdom can save millions of my people. At least, let me tell you!"

Caesar's curt voice cut into the excited babble that followed. "Let's take things in order. This is a serious thing you propose, Guinard. For the time being, we'll pass over the matter of this man you chanced to bring with you. His fate can be decided later. Sit down, all of you, and we'll hear what Guinard has to say."

MERRILL could see that Guinard's proposal had thrown a bombshell into this group. As they returned to the table, all were still excitedly talking, all except the brooding, cowled man who had not stirred.

Merrill found himself pushed into a seat at the table by Ikhnaton. The young Egyp-

tian king looked at him with friendly glance.

"It must seem strange to you, eh?" Ikhnaton said, over the excited clamor. "It did to me, when I first came through. I was almost afraid to use the Sign."

"How did you get the Sign?" Merrill asked him. "How were you initiated into —this?"

Ikhnaton explained. "Rodemos of Atlantis—he isn't here tonight—was the first to find a way into this world. He passed down the secret, which is imparted to only a few men in each generation."

The Egyptian continued. "I imagine you have heard of most of these here tonight. Though some, of course, are still in your future."

Merrill learned that the handsome Zyskyn was a great scientist of the 31st century Antarctican civilization. The old Chinese was Lao-Tse of the 5th Century BC and the swarthy, slender man beside him was the Dutch philosopher Spinoza.

Stout, pawky Benjamin Franklin sat beside the great Buddhist emperor Asoka. Next to them was John Loring, a famous space-explorer of the 25th Century, and across from them the merry face of Francois Rabelais.

"It's incredible," Merrill said hoarsely. "I've read and heard of most of these men —Caesar, yourself—I know how long you lived and how you died."

Ikhnaton interrupted sharply. "Don't mention anything like that! It's considered bad taste to talk here of a man's personal future, even when you know it from history. It would be disconcerting, you know."

MERRILL gestured past the excitedly clamoring group toward the cowled man who sat strangely silent and unmoved at the end of the table.

His face fascinated Merrill. It was smooth and young, but his dark, watching eyes had something infinitely old about them.

"Who is that?" he asked the Egyptian.

Ikhnaton shrugged. "That's Su Suum, who never talks about himself. We know only that he comes from some far future time, farther even than Zyskyn's age. He comes often, but just sits and listens."

The clamor of discussion that had been unloosed by Guinard's proposal was quelled again by the crisp voice of Julius Caesar.

"Will you not be quiet enough so that we may at least hear what Guinard has to say?" he demanded.

The uproar quieted. Men sat back down, and looked toward Guinard. Franklin polished his steel-rimmed spectacles with a silk handkerchief, while Rabelais drained his wine-cup and set it down with a sigh.

Merrill looked back and forth along the faces. From Ikhnaton of old Egypt, beside him, to the farthest end of the table where sat the silent figure of Su Suum, man of the remotest future.

Guinard was speaking urgently. "I know the laws of our brotherhood as well as you. First, to keep this world and our meetings always secret. Second, to give the Sign which is our badge of fellowship only to those who are above petty self-seeking. And third, that one age of Earth must never through us directly influence another age.

"Nevertheless," he continued earnestly, "I desire tonight that you grant an exception to that third law. I come here for my people, seeking aid to save my 20th Century land and race from utter misery."

HE WENT on, telling them of his war-stricken land and of the danger that anarchy and terror would crush its millions. He pictured his own helplessness to halt the tide.

Loring, the space-explorer of the 25th interrupted. "But from what I've read of your century's history, those convulsions of which you speak will finally end."

"They will end, yes, but before then millions of my people will have lived starved and stunted lives!" Guinard exclaimed. "It is to prevent that that I appeal to you for help."

"Let us be clear," said Socrates keenly. "Just what sort of help to you desire?"

Guinard looked toward Zyskyn, and John Loring, and the silent man called Su Suum.

"You three," he told them, "come from far future times when scientific progress is great. Could none of you suggest any scientific means of psychologically pacifying my people into good-will and cooperation?"

Merrill saw that Su Suum remained silent, watching abstractedly and making no

sign of assent. But young Zyskyn answered slowly.

"Why, yes, down in Antarctica our psycho-mechanists long ago solved that problem. We have certain apparatus whose subtle radiation we use to manipulate the psychology of backward peoples, and twist their thinking toward peace and cooperation."

"Give me the secret of that apparatus and with it I can save millions in my time from misery!" cried Guinard.

That the proposal was disturbing, Merrill could see. The group were silent, looking troubledly at each other.

Then old Lao-Tse spoke, using the unfamiliar language slowly and with difficulty.

"I am opposed to doing that. For it would violate the laws of time and infinity which separate the ages of our Earth. It would introduce a confusion of eras which might bring on cosmic disaster."

Ikhnaton retorted warmly. "What harm could it do? Guinard would keep his use of the apparatus secret. And it would save many. I say, let us make an exception to our law and help him."

LORING, the space-explorer, looked anxiously at the bald Greek next him. "Socrates, you're one of the wisest of us. What do you say?"

The Greek rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "It is my belief that all outward things are but forms and shadows of the ideal, and I cannot credit that the ideal laws of the universe would permit transgressing the bounds of Earthly time without dire results."

Francis Bacon spoke precisely and calmly. "I hold the other opinion. Once I wrote that our object should be to extend man's dominion over all the universe. Why not conquer time as space has been conquered?"

Spinoza and Franklin shook their heads doubtfully, and then Caesar interrupted restlessly.

"Talk, talk—we have too much of it here. What Guinard wants is action and help. Are we to give it to him?"

"I say again, let us help him!" Ikhnaton exclaimed. "Why should not the future aid the past, as the past has always aided its future?"

Rabelais shook his head sorrowfully. "Men are fools. Guinard's people would have no more troubles if they forgot their hatreds and hopes and stuck to their drinking."

Zyskyn spoke troubledly to the old statesman. "Guinard, they seem to feel there is too much danger in what you ask."

Guinard's thin shoulders sagged. "Then I shall never be able to steer my people out of their misery."

Uproar of argument broke out again. Merrill ignored it. The desperation, the hopelessness, in the old statesman's face had wakened a fierce resolve in the young American.

"Guinard, there's one way to get what you want," he muttered. "This way!"

And Merrill snatched out the flat pistol inside his jacket and leveled it at Zyskyn.

"I hate to do this," he said to the dumfounded group. "But I've *seen* the misery that Guinard is trying to relieve. He's got to have your help. You'll promise him the apparatus he needs, or—"

"Or what, man of the past?" said young Zyskyn, smiling faintly at Merrill.

He made a swift motion with his hand. From a bracelet on his wrist leaped a little tongue of green light.

It hit Merrill's arm with paralyzing shock. The pistol dropped from his nerveless fingers.

The silence was broken by Caesar's laugh. "I like that young fool. At least, he doesn't just talk—he tries to act."

"He has shown that the people of his age are too barbaric to be trusted with Zyskyn's science," snapped the space-explorer, Loring.

Guinard looked down strickenly at the American. "Lieutenant, you shouldn't have done that!"

AND then suddenly, through the increased uproar of disputing voices that followed Merrill's impulsive action and defeat, there came a slow, chill voice.

"Will you listen to me, brothers?"

It was the man at the farthest end of the long table who was speaking. The cowled figure of Su Suum, always before silent.

Zyskyn, Caesar, Franklin — all in the room were stricken to silence by the unex-

pected voice. They stared wonderingly at Su Suum.

"You have often wondered about me," Su Suum said quietly. "I told you that I came from Earth's far future, but I did not tell you more than that. I preferred to listen. But now, I think, I must speak.

"I come from a time far in Earth's future, indeed. By your reckoning, it would be the 14,000th Century."

"That far?" whispered Zyskyn, astounded. "But—"

Su Suum, his strange young-old face quiet and passionless, continued. "As to who I am—*I am the last.*"

A terrible realization came to Merrill, of the meaning of those quiet words. "You mean—?" Socrates was murmuring astoundedly.

"Yes," said Su Suum. "I mean that I am the last man of all men. The final survivor of the race to whose past you all belong."

His brooding eyes looked beyond them into infinite space and time. "All the history of our race, I know. I could tell you all of it, how the first star-colonists left Earth in the 34th Century, how the cooling Earth was itself evacuated in the 108th, how for thousands on thousands of years our race spread out through the galaxies and founded a cosmic empire of power and splendor you could not even imagine.

"And I could tell you, too, of how with the long ages that empire finally shrunk and withered as the galaxies faded and died. Of how the mighty realm and the trillioned races of men fell in inevitable decline, shrinking with the eras to fewer worlds, until at last but a remnant of them were left on a dying world far across the galaxy.

"I was the last of that remnant," Su Suum continued. "The last of all men left in a dying, darkened universe. With me, human history concludes its glorious span as we all knew that somewhere and someday it must conclude itself."

The cowled man made a gesture. "I was lonely, in that dying, haunted universe. And before I died I wanted to come back to the little world from which our race sprang, the Earth. Dead, icy and forlorn it is in my era—and I the only man upon it.

"That is why, by means of the Sign that descended through the ages to me, I came among you. I have sat here many times with you men of the past, listening to your talk of the ages. And to me, it has been as though I relived the wonderful saga of our race."

The men—these men from as many different ages—stared at Su Suum as though he were indeed a ghost from beyond death.

Merrill finally heard old Lao-Tse ask, "Then, last of men, what is your word as to the decision we must make on Guinard's request?"

SU SUUM spoke slowly. "My word is this: Even though it were possible to transgress the bounds of Earth's ages without disaster, even though you were able thus to save your peoples from confusion and struggle, would it be great gain?

"I tell you this—no matter what great powers you win, no matter how high you carry human achievement, in the end it must all conclude with *me*. Must end with a perished race, humanity's story told, all the great goals you struggled toward fallen to dust and nothingness.

"So, it is not important that you may not attain the goals toward which you struggle. What is important is the way in which you carry on that struggle, your own courage and kindness from day to day. Though you attain the most glittering Utopia of your dreams, yet it will someday perish. But the mere passing days of struggle that you make splendid by your courage, the record that you write in the pages of the past, that can *never* perish."

Merrill saw Guinard stand up, and in the midst of a deep silence speak unsteadily.

"I am answered from the world's end," said the old statesman. "And you have given me the courage of which you speak."

He looked around the silent group. "I shall return now. May my young friend return with me? I guarantee his silence."

There was a moment's hesitation, and then Caesar made a gesture. "Let him go, friends. Guinard's guarantee is good."

Guinard held his medallion-watch above himself and Merrill, pressed the jewels on its back. The thread of blinding light from the instrument struck the American and he knew nothing.

MERRILL awoke with sun streaming into his eyes. He sat up dazedly and found himself on the couch in Guinard's shabby hotel room.

The old man was bending over him. "I fear that you fell asleep in here last night, Lieutenant."

Merrill sprang to his feet. "Guinard! We're back on Earth, then! They let me come back!"

Guinard frowned at him in perplexity. "Back on Earth? I don't understand. I'm afraid you've been dreaming."

Merrill clutched his arm. "It was no dream! You were there with me, with Caesar, Socrates, all of them! And that man Su Suum—good God, the last of the human race—"

Guinard soothingly patted his shoulder. "There, Lieutenant, you've apparently had a nightmare of some kind."

Merrill stared at him. Then he spoke slowly. "I think I understand. You guaranteed my silence. You know that if you pretend it all never happened, I'll *have* to keep silent, since nobody would ever believe me."

The old statesman shook his head. "I'm sorry. I don't know what you're talking about."

Merrill felt staggered. Had it all then really been mere fabric of dream, that brotherhood of the ages? If it were—

Guinard was speaking. "Enough of this. There's work to do. Work that may or may not pull my people together. But it's got to be tried."

"But last night you were so hopeless," Merrill said wonderingly.

"That was my weakness," Guinard said quietly. "I forgot that it is not whether we win or lose the struggle that matters most, but how we bear ourselves in the fight. I shall not weaken again."

THE words of Su Suum reechoed in Merrill's mind. And he knew now that it had been no dream, even though Guinard would never admit it, even though he'd never be able to convince anyone.

And Guinard knew he knew, for the statesman's eyes met his in a long, quiet look. Then the old man turned toward the door.

"Come, Lieutenant. Our work is waiting for us."

Coming in the September **WEIRD TALES**

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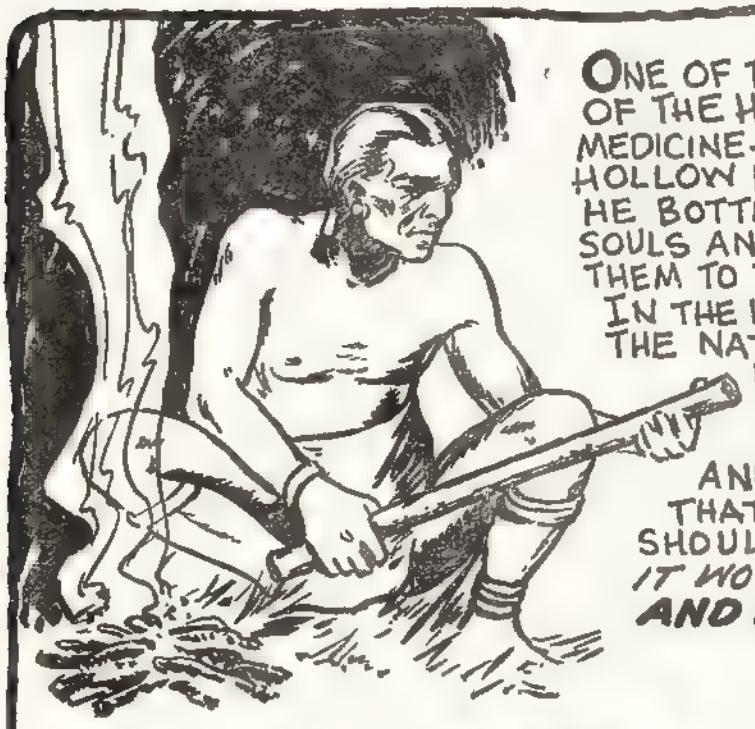
Superstitions and Taboos

by Weill



ONE OF THE IMPLEMENTS OF THE HAIDA INDIAN MEDICINE-MAN WAS A HOLLOW BONE, IN WHICH HE BOTTLED UP DEPARTING SOULS AND SO RESTORED THEM TO THEIR OWNERS!

IN THE ISLAND OF CELEBES THE NATIVES SOMETIMES FASTEN FISH-HOOKS TO A SICK MAN'S NOSE, NAVEL, AND FEET, SO THAT IF HIS SOUL SHOULD TRY TO ESCAPE *IT WOULD* **BE HOOKED AND HELD FAST!**

IT WAS ONCE BELIEVED THAT THE CHIPS OR CUTTINGS OF A GIBBET OR GALLOWS, IF WORN NEXT TO THE SKIN, WOULD PREVENT FEVER, AND THE ROPE WITH WHICH ONE HAD BEEN HANGED, IF TIED ABOUT THE HEAD, *WOULD CURE A HEADACHE!*

ANOTHER REMEDY FOR PAINS IN THE HEAD WAS TO SECURE MOSS THAT WAS GROWING ON A HUMAN SKULL, DRY IT, POWDER IT, **AND TAKE IT AS *SNUFF!***

Carnaby's Fish

By CARL JACOBI

MR. JASON CARNABY was a man of medium height, medium features, and medium habits. At forty-six he was one of those bachelors who, having passed from youth well into middle age, would have attracted no comment other than a casual query as to why he had never married. He operated a small real-estate business with rather shabby offices in the town of La Plante and, with the exception of

Heading by BORIS DOLGOV

At times the lake looked as though it had been superimposed upon the landscape like a double exposure photo

a stenographer who came in two days a week, he worked quite alone.

Inasmuch as La Plante was located near the Atlantic coast, much of his business had to do with shore property, summer homes and cottages. These holdings moved fairly fast, but occasionally he acquired a home which refused to attract a buyer.

Of all these, the Dumont place was undoubtedly the most difficult to move. While it was listed as "shore property", it was actually on Philip's Lake, a short distance inland. It was part of an estate which had passed through probate, old Captain Dumont having died more than five years ago. Since that time it had had but one occupant, a Dr. Septimus Levaseur, who had lived there almost a year and a half before his death, which had come about suddenly and somewhat obscurely.

The death of the doctor, who had been an amiable fellow, if somewhat distant and hazy at times, had given rise to some of the rumors which had become attached to the Dumont place and made it so difficult to sell or rent.

Dr. Levaseur had died of a heart attack, apparently brought on by over-exertion. He had been found on the East road the night of a big storm half-clad, a crucifix clutched in his hand. Mr. Carnaby, who was the soul of the conventional, had always regarded the doctor as somewhat queer, but, in final analysis, Mr. Carnaby's judgment was circumscribed by the question of rent, and Dr. Levaseur had always paid his rent promptly.

Nevertheless, his strange death had doubtless been the basis for the rumors that there was something odd about the house, that the whole property was damned, and that finally, Philip's Lake was "queer." Mr. Carnaby was admittedly at a loss as to how these stories had got started; the circumstance of Dr. Levaseur's having been found clasping a crucifix and but half-clad on the East road might have excited the superstitious, but Mr. Carnaby failed to discover how the lake came to be implicated. Since other property in Mr. Carnaby's hands adjoined the lake, he was irritated, lest some stigma similar to that attaching to the Dumont place should likewise become attached to other properties. He made some effort to isolate rumors concerning Philip's Lake, and finally got down to two basic tales.

Three cottage residents on the opposite shore from the Dumont place said that a small area of water far out toward the center of Philip's Lake was frequently rough and white-capped, when not a breath of wind was stirring. Mr. Carnaby's very reasonable suggestion that the lake might be connected to the ocean by underground channels opening off from the vicinity of the disturbed area was brushed aside. The cottagers countered with an additional tale to the effect of a pale light or a shimmering radiance which sometimes wafted over the lake like a will-o'-the-wisp. And finally, old John Bainley told of hearing on several occasions a melodious singing far out from shore, singing which was so wonderfully lovely he wanted to swim out to it, though he hadn't been in the water "for nigh unto sixty years." Whatever the source of these old wives' tales, they played their part in the failure of the Dumont house to attract a renter.

After repeated efforts to dispose of the property, all of which came to nothing, Mr. Carnaby decided one morning in July that something final should be done about the Dumont place. Accordingly, he gave the keys of his office to his stenographer, hitched his horse to the buckboard, and headed down the East road.

IN DUE time he reached Gail's Corners, where he rested the horse and refreshed himself with a soft drink at the settlement's only store, through the display windows of which he could see across the summer landscape to the circle of drab gray water which was Philip's Lake. He knew that this body of water was only by courtesy called a lake, for it was merely a small quay from which on occasion a neck of water afforded an outlet to the Atlantic.

As he stood there, gazing out at its surface, it occurred to him that he had never, after all, actually examined the lake; that is, he had not gone out on it, though he handled property touching upon it on all sides. There was something strangely melancholy and at the same time somberly attractive about Philip's Lake, and it might well be worth while to row out on to it, provided the flat-bottomed rowboat which had always

laid along the shore of the Dumont place was still there. At the same time, it might not be amiss to idle away a little time in fishing, a recreation for which Mr. Carnaby had found all too little time. Acting on this impulse, he bought a cane pole, a spool of line, and several varieties of artificial bait, and resumed his journey.

He reached the property at length: an old style Cape Cod house, rectangular in shape, with a narrow veranda and an acre of surrounding ground. It seemed, as he stood in the weed-grown yard, that the house had a detached look, as if in some way it did not belong there. Gazing at the lake again, he had the rather uncomfortable impression that it too had been superimposed upon the landscape like a double exposure photograph. He entered the house and went through the building room by room, making notes on the back of an old envelope as to repairs that should be made, their approximate cost and other items.

Finished, he locked the door and passed down the path toward the lake. A dozen yards from the house stood a stone well with a pagoda roof over it. At the shore he mused for some time over an old harpoon which Captain Dumont apparently had cast there in an idle moment. The weapon reminded him that Captain Dumont had served on a whaler in his younger days.

The flat-bottomed rowboat was still there. Mr. Carnaby bailed out the rain water with some effort, threw his new fishing tackle across the thwart and pushed out on to the lake. On the water the impression that the closely-wooded shores were somehow out of proportion came again, and he took off his spectacles and rubbed them with a polishing cloth. He began to feel that he had come here not of his own will but in response to an indefinable and growing attraction emanating from the depths of the green waves. What a queer creature man is, Mr. Carnaby thought, to create a fascination for the unpleasant. He thrust away a desire to leap overboard and, with an effort, began to arrange his tackle.

For an hour he fished. Having no leader, he fastened the plug directly to the line and proceeded to throw the bait as far out as he could with the aid of the pole, and then jerk it gently along through the water.

Tiring of his fruitless efforts at length, and wanting to rest his eyes from the glare of the sunlight on the water, Mr. Carnaby leaned back and lowered his lids. The day was drowsy, and so, too, was he. When he awoke, the sun had gone down and the gloom of late twilight was dropping upon the lake. In his boat, Mr. Carnaby was far out from shore, drifting aimlessly.

Indeed, he was approximately in the center of the lake, and a little wind was rippling the water there. Suddenly conscious of the time, Mr. Carnaby took up the oars and began to row hard. It did not occur to him that his fish-pole was propped under one thwart with the line trailing behind the boat in the water until in the half-darkness he saw the pole abruptly bend almost double. He barely had time to grab it and pull with all his strength.

THE fish came through the water slowly, heavily. As it drew closer, Carnaby could sense rather than see it weaving to and fro in the black water, not so much struggling to free itself as reluctant to come with the line, though his catch did not seem to come willingly. It was somewhat awkward to handle the cane-pole in his cramped quarters, but at last Carnaby got his catch alongside, and reached down to complete his capture.

His first impression was that he had caught a catfish. His second was of something so infinitely more horrible that an involuntary exclamation of horror escaped him.

But the twilight, surely, played his eyes tricks. He had now laid his pole down, and, still holding the line, though with uncertain eyes averted from his catch, he slipped a small flashlight from his pocket, switched it on, and turned the comparatively feeble ray on to his catch.

A woman's head drifted there, looking up at him—an exquisite feminine face with long blond hair trailing in the water, which, rippling over the countenance white in that darkness, revealed teeth bared in an expression of unutterable malignance. The barbs of one of the gang hooks had bitten deep into the red mouth, and from it flowed a thin stream of blood.

It was a live, a perfectly moulded human

head—but the body was that of a fish, with tail and fins!

For several seconds Mr. Barnaby sat frozen to immobility. Then the flashlight slipped from his hands; he dropped the line and began to row wildly for shore.

He beached the boat and staggered unsteadily up the path. When he reached the house he halted breathlessly, overcome by nervous reaction. The shadow of his patiently waiting horse and buckboard loomed beyond the gate, but in spite of this bewildering horror, he did not feel up to driving the lonely road back just yet. He climbed the stoop, inserted his key into the lock with trembling hands, and re-entered the house.

The stillness of the long-closed interior closed about him like a cloak, soothing his troubled nerves. He lit a lamp, carried it into the living room and placed it on the table. Then he got out his pipe and began to smoke slowly and deliberately.

Was he mad, he wondered, or was the thing he had seen only the after-effect of a latent dream? Had he witnessed some phantasmagoria, created by water and darkness which his numbed senses had reformed into a vagary of the subconscious? One thing was certain. Tell his experience to the townsfolk of La Plante, and he might as well write a no-sale ticket for the property. Once such a story got around, no amount of advertising would be able to overcome the superstitious aura that had already begun to gather around the Dumont place.

It came to him that certain rumors concerning Dr. Levaseur and his strange death had been bruited about with raised eyebrows—vague, formless whisperings. Certainly the man had been odd, and the oddity of his character was brought home to Carnaby now as he looked upon the room in which he stood.

THE walls had been done over in a shade of bluish green that was dark and cheerless. The rug was a light brown, and the border design resembled thick layers of pebbles interlaced with sand. On one wall was an old print of Heinrich Heine; near it hung a faded etching of a sailing vessel in a storm; and in one corner stood a bookcase filled with large and obviously heavy volumes.

Still smoking and somewhat calmer now, Mr. Carnaby crossed to the books. *Loreleysage in Dichtung und Musik. Mysteries of the Sea,* by Cornelius Van de Mar. *The History of Atlantis,* by Lewis Spence. As he stood looking at these titles, Carnaby became aware again, by a process of idea-association, of the nature of Dr. Levaseur's curious obsession. He was instantly apprehensive again, and curiously disturbed, for his memory brought back vividly that strange and horrible experience on the lake.

Dr. Levaseur had claimed to be an authority on loreleis, on marine lures of legend and mythology, and he had written several papers on these old beliefs. Surely these were somewhere available, thought Carnaby. Yet he was briefly reluctant to look for them, a little afraid of what he might find. However, after but a few moments of hesitation, he set about searching for Dr. Levaseur's papers among the publications in the bookcase, and in a short time found a thick sheaf of dusty foolscap, closely written in a fine, precise hand.

This he carried to a chair and read.

At first, in his nervous haste, he found it difficult to keep his attention to the pages, but gradually the brooding silence of the house drifted out of his consciousness. He read for an hour, and at the end of that time he sat back in silent amazement. Dr. Levaseur had apparently been not only an authority on lorelies and ancient allied folklore, but he had also been versed in a myriad of psychic phenomena which had any kind of marine background. And, incredible as it seemed, the doctor apparently had accepted many of these tales as factual accounts.

He had written at some length the account of the Tsiang Lora siren which hardened Dutch sailors had reported dwelt near an islet off the southeast coast of Java. Seen only at night, cloaked in bluish-white radiance, this siren, like her many mythological counterparts, took the form of a woman, lovely and ethereal, whose whispered plea for help drifted across the water with all the power of a lodestone. Dr. Levaseur had added to this narrative the factual results of several geodetic surveys made by the Netherlands East Indies Hydrographical Department, pointing out that the sea floor at this point of latitude and longitude sloped sharply upward and formed a shallow reef

or submerged tableland. In addition, the doctor recounted the foundering of a Dutch brigantine near this location in the early sixties. This ship had carried a passenger, a rich Malay woman, who was suspected of being a priestess of the *dularna* sect.

He had carefully chronicled the tale of Dabra Khan in the Arabian Gulf, a masculine lorelei who supposedly shouted false commands in the helmsman's ears during a storm; of McClannon's Folly, a needle spire of rock off the Cornish coast which changed to a voloptuous maiden clinging to a spar when viewed through a lane of fog, each case described with scholarly directness.

But toward the end of the manuscript there was an underlined paragraph that Mr. Carnaby read several times.

It is now four months since I have come here. Yesterday I went out upon Philip's Lake for the first time, and I know now that I was not wrong in my judgment. It is there, it called out to me, and for a moment I thought I saw it in all its malevolent beauty.

I cannot wait until I have seen it again. Tomorrow, taking full precautions, and using all the powers at my disposal, I shall strive to entice it from its lair. The desire is almost overwhelming.

Mr. Carnaby sat looking off into space for a long time. At length he put his pipe into his pocket and returned the manuscript to the bookcase. He blew out the lamp and made his way out of the house to the buckboard. He was in deep, perturbed thought as he drove slowly home.

THEREAFTER, Mr. Carnaby made no further attempt to find a renter for the Dumont place. He filed the deed and abstract away in an old shoe-box, marked: *Miscellaneous N.G.*, and he went about his business, saying nothing to anyone about his experience on the lake.

In this manner fall passed into winter, and the town of La Plante went about its routine in its usual fashion. It was the following spring, a balmy day in early May, that Mr. Carnaby chanced to meet his old friend, Lawyer Herrick, as the latter was emerging from the courthouse.

"Well, how's business?" Herrick inquired politely, accepting Mr. Carnaby's cigar. "Should be a run on shore property this summer, what with that new pike cut through from Kenleyville."

"Yes, there should," Mr. Carnaby agreed.

"I see you've got the Dumont place rented again," Herrick continued. "I thought you would in time. It's a nice place."

Mr. Carnaby looked at the lawyer sharply. "Why no, it's not rented. What ever made you think it was?"

Herrick flicked his cigar ash into the wind and frowned slightly. "I drove by there yesterday, and I thought I saw a woman sitting on the shore, sunning herself. A woman with blond hair."

"Is that so?" said the real estate man. "That's odd."

It was so odd that he decided to visit the property the next day. He could, he told himself, kill two birds with one stone. A tenant farther down the East road had complained of a bad roof, and Mr. Carnaby had put off for some time the task of inspecting it.

When he turned into the lane leading to the Dumont house, Mr. Carnaby cast a quick glance at the shore. The westering sun was in his eyes, and the fire-like reflection from one of the windows blinded him, but for a moment he fancied he saw a woman sitting on the shore. But at second glance, somewhat out of range of the sun's reflection, he saw nothing; the place bore the unmistakable appearance of desertion—not alone the house, in its aloof desolation, but all the land belonging to it.

Mr. Carnaby opened the house and went into the living room. With all his experience in entering long-closed houses, he could never repress the initial spell of depression which swept over him as his nostrils caught the smell of dust and stale air. Nothing was changed from his visit of six months before. Yet he had, however, curiously, expected change; the casual suggestion inherent in Herrick's brief conversation had affected him most disagreeably; it had caused him to think again of that horrible experience on the lake, of Dr. Levaseur's pursuits and death, of the tales concerned the Dumont place.

He lit the lamp, for daylight was fading outside, and already the room was hazed with early twilight. He lit his pipe, too, and,

as usual, the tobacco smoke soothed him somewhat. Now that he was here, his thoughts returned again to Dr. Levaseur's manuscript; he took it from the bookcase where he had left it, and sat down to glance through it again. This time, however, he could find no attraction in the written words —the paragraphs seemed stilted, disconnected, even absurd. Nevertheless, cold as he remained to Dr. Levaseur's thesis of the reality of loreleis and similar creatures, he was most unpleasantly impressed by the scholarly, almost dryly erudite weight of evidence which the doctor had adduced to sustain certain half-hinted beliefs. And there was that curious reference to "something" in Philip's Lake.

SOMETHING like an hour passed before he heard the singing. Even then he was hardly aware of it, so soft was the voice and so far off. But presently he looked up from the manuscript and listened. Almost at the limit of his hearing range it sounded, the overtones blending into the sighing of the wind.

Definitely it was a woman's voice, singing a strange lilting melody. It grew louder, and, despite an apprehensive hesitation, Carnaby strode to the window and opened it. It was a song such as he had never heard before, sung in a contralto, wandering up and down the octaves in an aimless yet appealing way. Through the window he could see no living person, only the shadowy lombardies that marched down the slope to the shore of the lake.

The singing grew louder until it seemed to resound from the walls of the room. And now as he listened, Mr. Carnaby experienced a strange sensation. It was as if every nerve and fiber of his body responded to that voice and urged him to go to its source. It was a lure, and with his bucolic matter-of-factness the real estate man unconsciously fought it with all his will.

He might as well have been fastened to a steel cable. Step by step he found himself drawn across the room to the door and out on to the veranda. There he halted again, all but overcome by that voice.

On feet that were dead things Mr. Carnaby strode down the steps and down the path. He passed the well and continued to the shore of the lake. Black water rippled at his feet.

And then he saw her. She was twenty yards from shore, waist deep in the water, moving slowly toward him. In the moonlight he could see her carmine lips as she sang her golden song. He could see her dripping tresses coiling about her nude shoulders. On she came, and still he stood there transfixed, held by some alien power.

Suddenly the singing ceased. Mr. Carnaby felt something snap in his consciousness like a clipped wire. The woman was directly before him now, and as she advanced, the lower portion of her body came clear of the water. A greenish scaled body edged with white. The body of a fish! The head and breasts were those of a woman, but even as he watched, he saw that head bloat and swell, lose its features, change to a horrible reptilian mass that gazed upon him with diabolic fury!

He turned, the spell broken, and the thing lunged toward him, seeming to move through the air. Down the beach Mr. Carnaby ran, a mighty horror assailing him, but his steps were turned to lead. Then, even as he faltered, he caught the glint of moonlight on a shaft in the sand. Old Captain Dumont's harpoon.

Driven by the wild impulse to save himself, he bent down, seized it and turned to face the monster. His heart stood still. There it was directly before him, an horrendous, loathsome beast with slavering lips and blazing, hyalescent eyes. It closed in, and as it did, Mr. Carnaby drove the harpoon before him with every ounce of strength he possessed. He felt the stinging recoil, but whether it was merely his arm reaching the limit of its range he did not know. Things became vague and indistinct for Mr. Carnaby then. A piercing scream seared into his ears. The monster wavered and sank backward. Then, uttering low, mueling cries, it turned and scrambled down the beach. Simultaneously the surface of the black lake seemed to rear upward and boil in a great cauldron of lashing waves and foam.

The thing reeled into the water. Twenty yards from shore it fell forward like a spent juggernaut. For a moment it lay there, body awash, heaving up and down. Then slowly it sank from sight.

MR. CARNABY spent eleven days in the La Plante hospital under close surveillance of his physician. Upon his release, he forced himself, however reluctantly, to return to the Dumont place and make a thorough investigation. He found the harpoon on the beach, where he had left it; he found also the indentations of his footprints. He found nothing more. Moreover, the house seemed exceedingly pleasant, even inviting. He could discover but one somewhat odd fact, and this mattered hardly at all—the report of the governmental meteorological station at the county seat nine miles east stated that, from May seventh to May sixteenth inclusive, wind velocities in the La Plante district were at the lowest point they had been for the entire year. Yet, during that time Philip's Lake remained in a turbulent state, white-capped and sullen with angry waves.

The effect of all this was to inspire Mr. Carnaby with the conviction that, in time, the Dumont place might after all be made to pay. He paid it another visit and found nothing altered; he took time to make a few repairs and had the house cleaned up a little. In a fortnight he managed to find a young couple who wanted the house, and rented it forthwith.

He waited uneasily for several weeks for any word of trouble, but nothing came from the Dumont place but the rent, with pleasant regularity, and presently Mr. Carnaby began to look back upon his experience as a kind of neurotic condition which had given him unhealthy hallucinations.

It was ten months before he visited Gail's Corners again. On that occasion he had to pay a visit to the village doctor concerning a property he was handling for him. He found the doctor just back from the country, offered him a cigar, and lit one for himself.

"It's a coincidence seeing you, Carnaby," said Dr. Holmes. "I've just come from one of your tenants—and I need a drink, bad. Just get that bottle and the glasses from that cupboard, will you?"

Carnaby did so, his eyebrows raised. "Which tenants?"

"The Plaisiers. They're on the Dumont place."

A ball of alarm exploded inside Carnaby; he sat down, feeling his mouth going dry. "Nothing wrong, is there?"

"Wrong? God knows what you'd call it, Carnaby." He shook his head and poured himself a drink. "I delivered her baby all right—usually have trouble with the first, you know—but I didn't have any trouble with the delivery. But the baby! My God, Carnaby!—I never saw a baby that looked so much like a fish in all my life!"

He poured a drink for Carnaby and looked up to hand it to him. He was not across the desk from him where but a moment before he had been. Quietly, without a sound, Mr. Carnaby had fainted.

Quaking Providence

By REEDER GOULD

HIS quiet voice interrupted some pretty doleful thoughts on the future of a war correspondent now that even most of the great problems of peace were solved.

"Would you care to have a drink on Providence?"

He was a little man. Fairly well dressed and rather oldish. I noticed all of that later.

But as I turned slowly on the high bar stool, half expecting to see either a friend or a drunken jester, my first attention centered on his expression—an almost indescribable mixture of cynicism, pleading and an odd gleam that I thought was of humor.

I would, I told him, have one more Cuba Libre.

"That is," I added, "if we can talk about anything except who won the Second World War."

Amazingly, he paled and seemed actually about to run.

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

It's a good thing that the little man with the electric hammer was on our side!

"Just a pet idea of mine," I said hurriedly. "I'm just a newspaperman enough to think that nobody wins a war. That everybody loses."

"Newspaperman." He appeared to be weighing doubtful merits of that profession. Finally he shrugged.

"Ever find a story so big you couldn't write it?"

That didn't take much remembering.

"Found several big ones I couldn't prove," I admitted, "and didn't bother to write 'em."

"My position exactly," he declared.

My news-nose tingled. I put several nickels in the juke box "silence" slot and carried our drinks to a table.

"I have in here," he tapped his forehead, "a story too big to write. It's even too big to tell. But I shall tell you. And you won't be able to write it either. Then we can both stay awake nights."

He laughed. A not-so-funny laugh. I took a wrong slant on that and on his last sentence and stood up to go.

"I've an appointment," I muttered. "Some other time, maybe."

His hand was on my arm immediately, his voice almost a sob.

"Please—I know who won the war. Won't you listen?"

He appeared sane, and tremendously serious. I ordered another drink.

"It will sound trite," he admitted, "but I must tell someone, or I shall go insane. Here—look at this."

He handed me one of a small packet of short clippings. All, he said, were about the same—reports from various parts of the world on recordings of earthquakes.

I still carry in my wallet the one he handed to me.

"WASHINGTON, May 27—(AP)—University of Washington observatory officials reported recording at 4:5236 a.m. (EST) today an earth tremor described as of mild intensity and apparently originating about 2,000 miles southwest of here."

The little man was talking as I read, something about majoring in Physics at Rensselaer. I noticed pencilled notes on the clippings, apparently a minor correction in the split-second timing reported.

"Look, Providence," I began, "what—?"

His voice dropped nearly to a whisper.

"You must listen closely. My name is not Providence. That's just my private joke—'Providence Won the War,' y'know."

He was beginning to make a little sense. That had been the cry, all right, when amazing earthquakes razed much of Germany and most of Japan just as our rocket-blasted continental invasion nearly faltered and stalemate appeared more than a horrible possibility. Millions had shouted it—"Providence Won the War!"

BUT this particular Providence, or whatever his name was, seemed to have changed the subject. He was asking whether there was any particular speed at which my car seemed to vibrate most.

"My pre-war buggy used to shake at 52," "but what has that to do with what?"

"Resonance," he explained. "That's where your engine vibrations reached the natural vibration frequency of your car frame. Like hitting a rubber ball at just the right intervals to keep it bouncing. Like you tap a short pendulum more often than a long one. Do you follow me?"

I gave up trying to guess his objective and just nodded.

"Materials inside the earth have natural vibration periods, too. And they follow the laws of wave motion. That's how the war ended."

That last sentence left me completely lost, and I said so.

"You'll see," he promised. "My hobby was seismology. I studied earthquakes for thirty years.

"I don't know yet—and no one else does—what causes the big quakes. The tectonic quakes are just earth-crust foldings. But bathyseisms, real world-shakers, are still a mystery."

Some of the words were practically so much double talk. But I followed the general idea, and with increasing interest. We had another drink.

"But," he resumed, "I did learn something of the laws of seismology. Including the fact that shock waves travel from one to seven miles per second, increasing speed as they go deeper."

Then he virtually threw a textbook at me, something about seeking locations for a "seismic vertical origin point" from which

"vibrations could be concentrated on a preselected curved lamelliform epicenter."

I don't know yet whether it does or doesn't make sense. I can report part of it only because I was a good reporter for twenty years.

I did my best to appear impressed, waiting for him to get back to English again.

"It wasn't easy," he said. "I finally calculated that from one location in southwest Texas I could hit both objectives."

More scientific double-talk then, something about having to take into account gravitational effects of the moon, the sun and distant planets before finally drilling what he hoped would be a "dry" oil well.

"I did not strike oil," he said, "and as soon as the rig was deserted I lowered my equipment and began to shake the world."

I guess my eyebrows hit a new high. But he—probably deliberately—misinterpreted my astonishment.

"Oh," he said hastily, "just microseismics at first."

"I still," he admitted, "had lots to learn. Such as that some of the layers of heterogeneous rock refract and reflect earth waves like glass affects light. Why, the first time I aimed at Harvard Observatory, I was picked up on the California coast."

Aimed at Harvard? Picked up?

He signalled for a drink, and then spoke as if to a ten-year-old.

"I—well, as simply as I can put it, the oil well got me down to primary rock. Then I tapped on that rock with an electric hammer. Tiny taps, at first, until I got my bearings.

"I learned that by varying the frequency of those taps I could control not only the directional effect of shock waves, but also their emergent intensity."

HE PAUSED while I, fighting a feeling that here was a bigger story than I could handle, ordered some coffee.

Many of his experiments, he confessed, were of an "Edisonian" nature—trying this and that just to see what would happen.

"Steinmetz," he mused, "probably could have done it all on paper first. I made several rather ghastly errors, especially in Turkey and Argentina. But I finally learned control, and I know I saved more lives than I destroyed. Don't you think so?"

His last question was a plea. I was still unwilling to grasp what I knew by then he was going to tell me. But I nodded, sympathetically.

"The emergent intensity was the thing," he said. "I found I could build it up, like a jumping boy finally shaking a large suspension bridge. Why, with taps hardly strong enough to disturb a sound sleeper, I could rattle dishes all over New England."

He was making plenty of sense by then. An already-blasted Berlin crumbling. . . . Tokyo crashing and burning as if hit by a million block-busters. Civilization saved by a Providential—

Providence!

I grasped his arms. My news-nose must have been trembling.

"Then that's why you call yourself—why, man, you're . . . you're Public Hero No. 1! I'll scoop the world! We'll—"

He was standing, moving away. Fear was in his eyes, now, and that odd gleam I had noticed as we met.

Then a sort of craftiness seemed to replace the fear.

"Lis'n," he demanded. He was rocking. Saliva dripped from his mouth.

"Lis'n. I jus' came in here for a few drinks, see. I never saw such a gul'bl newspaperman. All I been tellin' you is a lot of, uh, hooey, see? 'Magination. Put it on your 'spense account as entertainment. 'Magination."

Had I been an umpchay! Gulping down a bunch of stuff he'd probably thought up as he went along, just for the drinks. Making me ruin good rum drinks with coffee. Was I an A-1 jerk!

I went to the bar to pay the check. On one stool lay several more short clippings about quake recordings. I examined them idly, thinking only that my guest had come well prepared.

Suddenly I came across a folded sheet of note paper. It was covered with tiny figures and mathematical hieroglyphics too complicated for my limited calculus to follow. Say! Then—

"Providence!" I shouted, "what about—hey! Where—hey!"

Providence—and the No. 1 news story of the century—were gone.

The Dead Man

By RAY BRADBURY

"THAT'S the man, right over there," said Mrs. Ribmoll, nodding across the street. "See that man perched on the tar barrel afront Mr. Jenkins' store? Well, that's him. They call him Odd Martin."

"The one that says he's dead?" cried Arthur.

Mrs. Ribmoll nodded. "Crazy as a weasel down a chimney. Carries on firm about how he's been dead since the flood and nobody appreciates."

"I see him sitting there every day," cried Arthur.

"Oh, yes, he sits there, he does. Sits there and stares at nothing. I say it's a crying shame they don't throw him in jail."

Arthur made a face at the man. "Yah!"

"Never mind, he won't notice you. Most uncivil man I ever seen. Nothing pleases

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

Sure, there were worse guys than Martin—only he was dead!

him." She yanked Arthur's arm. "Come on, sonny, we got shopping to do."

They passed on up the street past the barber shop. In the window, after they'd gone by, stood Mr. Simpson, snipping his blue shears and chewing his tasteless gum. He squinted thoughtfully out through the fly-specked glass, looking at the man sitting over there on the tar barrel. "I figure the best thing could happen to Odd Martin would be to get married," he figured. His eyes glinted slyly. Over his shoulder he looked at his manicurist, Miss Weldon, who was busy burnishing the scraggly fingernails of a farmer named Gilpatrick. Miss Weldon, at this suggestion, did not look up. She had heard it often. They were always ragging her about Odd Martin.

Mr. Simpson walked back and started work on Gilpatrick's dusty hair again. Gilpatrick chuckled softly. "What woman would marry Odd? Sometimes I almost believe he *is* dead. He's got an awful odor to him."

Miss Wellon looked up into Mr. Gilpatrick's face and carefully cut his finger with one of her little scalpels. "Gol darn it!" "Watch what you're doing, woman!"

Miss Weldon looked at him with calm little blue eyes in a small white face. Her hair was mouse-brown; she wore no make-up and talked to no one most of the time.

Mr. Simpson cackled and snicked his blue steel shears. "Hope, hope, hope!" he laughed like that. "Miss Weldon, she knows what she's doin', Gilpatrick. You just be careful. Miss Weldon, she give a bottle of eau de cologne to Odd Martin last Christmas. It helped cover up his smell."

Miss Weldon laid down her instruments.

"Sorry, Miss Weldon," apologized Mr. Simpson. "I won't say no more."

Reluctantly, she took up her instruments again.

"Hey, there he goes again!" cried one of the four other men waiting in the shop. Mr. Simpson whirled, almost taking Gilpatrick's pink ear with him in his shears. "Come look, boys!"

ACROSS the street the sheriff stepped out of his office door just then and he saw it happen, too. He saw what Odd Martin was doing.

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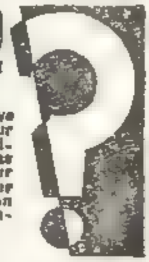

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Everybody came running from all the little stores.

The sheriff arrived and looked down into the gutter.

"Come on now, Odd Martin, come on now," he shouted. He poked down into the gutter with his shiny black boot-tip. "Come on, get up. You're not dead. You're good as me. You'll catch your death of cold there with all them gum wrappers and cigar butts! Come on, get up!"

Mr. Simpson arrived on the scene and looked at Odd Martin lying there. "He looks like a carton of milk."

"He's takin up valuable parkin' space for cars, this bein' Friday mornin'," whined the sheriff. "And lots of people needin' the area. Here now, Odd. Hmm. Well, give me a hand here, boys."

They laid the body on the sidewalk.

"Let him stay here," declared the sheriff, jostling around in his boots. "Just let him stay till he gets tired of layin'. He's done this a million times before. Likes the publicity. *Git*, you kids!"

He sent a bunch of children scuttling ahead of his cheek of tobacco.

Back in the barber shop, Simpson looked around. "Where's Miss Weldon? Unh." He looked through the glass. "There she is, brushing him off again, while he lies there. Fixing his coat, buttoning it up. Here she comes back. Don't nobody fun with her, she resents it."

The barber clock said twelve o'clock and then one and then two and then three. Mr. Simpson kept track of it. "I make you a bet that Odd Martin lies over there 'till four o'clock," he said.

Someone else said, "I'll bet he's there until four-thirty."

"Last time—" a snickering of the shears "—he was there four hours. Nice warm day today. He may nap there until five. I'll say five. Let's see your money, gents or maybe later."

The money was collected and put on a shelf by the hair-ointments.

One of the younger men began shaving a stick with his pocketknife. "It's sorta funny how we joke about Odd. We're scared of him, inside. I mean we won't let ourselves believe he's really dead. We don't dare believe it. We'd never get over it if we knew. So we make him a joke. We let him lie around. He don't hurt nobody. He's just there. But I notice Doc Hudson has never really touched Odd's heart with his stethoscope. Scared of what he'd find, I bet."

"Scared of what he'd find!" Laughter. Simpson laughed and snished his shears. Two men with crusty beards laughed, a little too loud. The laughter didn't last long. "Great one for jokin', you are!" they all said, slapping their gaunt knees.

Miss Weldon, she went on manicuring her client.

"He's getting up!"

There was a general scramble to the plate glass window to watch Odd Martin gain his feet. "He's up on one knee, now up on the other, now someone's givin' him a hand."

"It's Miss Weldon. She sure got over there in a rush."

"What time is it?"

"Five o'clock. Pay me, boys!"

"That Miss Weldon's a queer nut herself. Takin' after a man like Odd."

Simpson clicked his scissors. "Being an orphan, she's got quiet ways. She likes men who don't say much. Odd, he don't say hardly anything. Just the opposite of us crude men, eh, fellows? We talk too much. Miss Weldon don't like our way of talking."

"There they go, the two of 'em, Miss Weldon and Odd Martin.

"Say, take a little more off around my ears, will you, Simp?"

SKIPPING down the street, bouncing a red rubber ball, came little Charlie Bellows, his blonde hair flopping in a yellow fringe over his blue eyes. He bounced the ball abstractedly, tongue between lips, and the ball fell under Odd Martin's feet where he sat once more on the tar barrel. Inside the grocery, Miss Weldon was doing her supper shopping, putting soup cans and vegetable cans into a basket.

"Can I have my ball?" asked little Charlie Bellows upward at the six feet, two inches of Odd Martin. No one was within hearing distance.

"Can you have your ball?" said Odd Martin haltingly. He turned it over inside his

head, it appeared. His level gray eyes shaped up Charlie like one would shape up a little ball of clay. "You can have your ball; yes, take it."

Charlie bent slowly and took hold of the bright red rubber globe and arose slowly, a secretive look in his eyes. He looked north and south and then up at Odd's bony pale brown face. "I know something."

Odd Martin looked down. "You know something?"

Charlie leaned forward. "You're dead."

Odd Martin sat there.

"You're really dead," whispered little Charlie Bellows. "But I'm the only one who really knows. I believe you, Mr. Odd. I tried it once myself. Dying, I mean. It's hard. It's work. I laid on the floor for an hour. But I blinked and my stomach itched, so I scratched it. Then—I quit. Why?" He looked at his shoes. "'Cause I had to go to the bathroom."

A slow, understanding smile formed in the soft pallid flesh of Odd Martin's long, bony face. "It is work. It isn't easy."

"Sometimes I think about you," said Charlie. "I see you walking by my house at night. Sometimes at two in the morning. Sometimes at four. I wake up and I know you're out walking around. I know I should look out, and I do, and, gee, there you are, walking and walking. Not going hardly any place."

"There's no place to go." Odd sat with his large square, calloused hands on his knees. "I try thinking of some—place to —go—" He slowed, like a horse to a bit-pull "—but it's hard to think. I try and—try. Sometimes I almost know what to do, where to go. Then I forget. Once I had an idea to go to a doctor and have him declare me dead, but somehow—" his voice was slow and husky and low "—I never got there."

Charlie looked straight at him. "If you want, I'll take you."

Odd Martin looked leisurely at the setting sun. "No. I'm weary-tired, but I'll —wait. Now I've gone this far, I'm curious to see what happens next. After the flood that washed away my farm and all my stock and put me under water, like a chicken in a bucket, I filled up like you'd fill a thermos with water, and I came walking out of the

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flood, anyhow. But I knew I was dead. Late of nights I lay listening in my room, but there's no heartbeat in my ears or in my chest or in my wrists, though I lie still as a cold cricket. Nothing inside me but a darkness and a relaxation and an understanding. There must be a reason for me still walking, though. Maybe it was because I was still young when I died. Only twenty-eight, and not married yet. I always wanted to marry. Never got around to it. Here I am, doing odd jobs around town, saving my money, 'cause I never eat, heck, I *can't* eat, and sometimes getting so discouraged and downright bewildered that I lie down in the gutter and hope they'll take me and poke me in a pine box and lay me away forever. Yet at the same time—I don't want that. I want a little more. I know that whenever Miss Weldon walks by and I see the wind playing her hair like a little brown feather—" He sighed away into silence.

Charlie Bellows waited politely a minute, then cleared his throat and darted away, bouncing his ball. "See you later!"

Odd stared at the spot where Charlie'd been. Five minutes later he blinked. "Eh? Somebody here? Somebody speak?"

MISS WELDON came out of the grocery with a basket full of food.

"Would you like to walk me home, Odd?"

They walked along in an easy silence, she careful not to walk too fast, because he set his legs down carefully. The wind rustled in the cedars and in the elms and the maples all along the way. Several times his lips parted and he glanced aside at her, and then he shut his mouth tight and stared ahead, as if looking at something a million miles away.

Finally, he said. "Miss Weldon?"

"Yes, Odd?"

"I been saving and saving up my money. I've got quite a handsome sum. I don't spend much for anything, and—you'd be surprised," he said, sincerely. "I got about a thousand dollars. Maybe more. Some times I count it and get tired and I can't count no more. And—" he seemed baffled and a little angry with her suddenly. "Why do you like me, Miss Weldon?" he demanded.

She looked a little surprised, then smiled up at him. It was almost a child-like look of liking she gave him. "Because you're quiet. Because you're not loud and mean like the men at the barber shop. Because I'm lonely, and you've been kind. Because you're the first one that ever liked me. The others don't even look at me once. They say I can't think. They say I'm a moron, because I didn't finish the sixth grade. But I'm so lonely, Odd, and talking to you means so much."

He held her small white hand, tight.

She moistened her lips. "I wish we could do something about the way people talk about you. I don't want to sound mean, but if you'd only stop telling them you're dead, Odd."

He stopped walking. "Then you don't believe me, either," he said remotely.

"You're 'dead' for want of a good woman's cooking, for loving, for living right, Odd. That's what you mean by 'dead'; nothing else!"

His gray eyes were deep and lost. "Is that what I mean?" He saw her eager, shiny face. "Yes, that's what I mean. You guessed it right. That's what I mean."

Their footsteps went alone together, drifting in the wind, like leaves floating, and the night got darker and softer and the stars came out.

TWO boys and two girls stood under a street lamp about nine o'clock that evening. Far away down the street someone walked along slowly, quietly, alone.

"There he is," said one of the boys. "*You* ask him, Tom."

Tom scowled uneasily. The girls laughed at him. Tom said. "Oh, okay, but you come along."

The wind flung the trees right and left, shaking down leaves in singles and clusters that fell past Odd Martin's head as he approached.

"Mr. Odd? Hey there, Mr. Odd?"

"Eh? Oh, hello."

"We—uh—that is—" gulped Tom, looking around for assistance. "We want to know if—well—we want you to come to our party!"

A minute later, after looking at Tom's clean, soap-smelling face and seeing the

pretty blue jacket his sixteen-year-old girl friend wore, Odd Martin answered. "Thank you. But I don't know. I might forget to come."

"No, you wouldn't," insisted Tom. "You'd remember this one, because it's Halloween!"

One of the girls yanked Tom's arm and hissed. "Let's not, Tom. Let's not. Please. He won't do, Tom. He isn't scary enough."

Tom shook her off. "Let *me* handle this."

The girl pleaded. "Please, no. He's just a dirty old man. Bill can put candle tallow on his fingers and those horrible porcelain teeth in his mouth and the green chalk marks under his eyes, and scare the ducks out of us. We don't need *him!*" And she jerked her rebellious head at Odd.

Odd Martin stood there. He heard the wind in the high tree-tops for ten minutes before he knew that the four young people were gone. A small dry laugh came up in his mouth like a pebble. Children. Halloween. Not scary enough. Bill would do better. Just an old man. He tasted the laughter and found it both strange and bitter.

THE next morning little Charlie Bellows flung his ball against the store front, retrieved it, flung it again. He heard someone humming behind him, turned. "Oh, hello, Mr. Odd!"

Odd Martin was walking along, with green paper dollars in his fingers, counting it. He stopped, suddenly. His eyes were blank.

"Charlie," he cried out. "Charlie!" His hands groped.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Odd!"

"Charlie, where was I going? Where was I going? Going somewhere to buy something for Miss Weldon! Here, Charlie, help me!"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Odd." Charlie ran up and stood in his shadow.

A hand came down, money in it, seventy dollars of money. "Charlie, run buy a dress for—Miss Weldon—" His mind was grasping, clutching, seizing, wrestling in a web of forgetfulness. There was stark terror and longing and fear in his face. "I can't remember the place, oh God, help me re-

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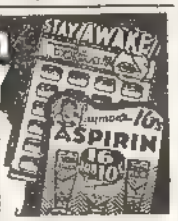

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member. A dress and a coat, for Miss Weldon, at—at—"

"Krausmeyer's Department Store?" asked Charlie, helpfully.

"No."

"Fieldman's?"

"No!"

"Mr. Leiberman's?"

"Leiberman! That's it! Leiberman, Leiberman! Here, here, Charlie, here, run down there to—"

"Leiberman's."

"—and get a new green dress for—Miss Weldon, and a coat. A new green dress with yellow roses painted on it. You get them and bring them to me here. Oh, Charlie, wait."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Odd?"

"Charlie—you think, maybe I could clean up at your house?" asked Odd quietly. "I need a—a bath."

"Gee, I don't know, Mr. Odd. My folks are funny. I don't know."

"That's all right, Charlie. I understand. Run now!"

Charlie ran on the double, clutching the money. He ran by the barber shop. He poked his head in. Mr. Simpson stopped snipping on Mr. Trumbull's hair and glared at him. "Hey!" cried Charlie. "Odd Martin's humming a tune!"

"What tune?" asked Mr. Simpson.

"It goes like this," said Charlie, and hummed it.

"Yee Gods Amaughty!" bellowed Simpson. "So that's why Miss Weldon ain't here manicurin' this morning! That there tune's the Wedding March!"

Charlie ran on. Pandemonium!

SHOUTING, laughter, the sound of water squishing and pattering. The back of the barber shop steamed. They took turns. First, Mr. Simpson got a bucket of hot water and tossed it down in a flap over Odd Martin, who sat in the tub, saying nothing, just sitting there, and then Mr. Trumbull scrubbed Odd Martin's pale back with a big brush and lots of cow-soap, and every once in a while Shorty Phillips doused Odd with a jigger of eau de cologne. They all laughed and ran around in the steam. "Gettin' married, hunh, Odd? Congratulations, boy!" More water, "I al-

ways said that's what you needed," laughed Mr. Simpson, hitting Odd in the chest with a bunch of cold water this time. Odd Martin pretended not to even notice the shock. "You'll smell better now!"

Odd sat there. "Thanks. Thanks so very much for doing this. Thanks for helping me. Thanks for giving me a bath this way. I needed it."

Simpson laughed behind his hand. "Sure thing, anything for you, Odd."

Someone whispered in the steamy background, "Imagine her and him married? A moron married to an idiot!"

Simpson frowned. "Shut up back there!"

Charlie rushed in. "Here's the green dress, Mr. Odd!"

An hour later they had Odd in the barber chair. Someone had lent him a new pair of shoes. Mr. Trumbull was polishing them vigorously, winking at everybody. Mr. Simpson snipped Odd's hair for him, would not take money for it. "No, no, Odd, you keep that as a wedding present from me to you. Yes, sir." And he spat. Then he shook some rose-water all over Odd's dark hair. "There. Moonlight and roses!"

Martin looked around. "You won't tell nobody about this marriage," he asked, "until tomorrow? Me and Miss Weldon sort of want a marriage without the town poking fun. You understand?"

"Why sure, sure, Odd," said Simpson, finishing the job. "Mum's the word. Where you going to live? You buying a new farm?"

"Farm?" Odd Martin stepped down from the chair. Somebody lent him a nice new coat and someone else had pressed his pants for him. He looked fine. "Yes, I'm going to buy the property now. Have to pay extra for it, but it's worth it. Extra. Come along now, Charlie Bellows." He went to the door. "I bought a house out on the edge of town. I have to go make the payment on it now. Come on, Charlie."

Simpson stopped him. "What's it like? You didn't have much money; you couldn't afford much."

"No," said Odd, "you're right. It's a small house. But it'll do. Some folks built it awhile back, then moved away East somewheres, it was up for sale for only five hundred, so I got it. Miss Weldon and I are moving out there tonight, after our mar-

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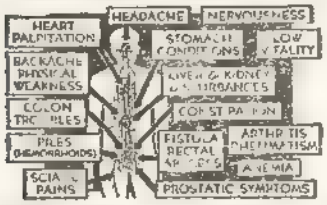

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riage. But don't tell nobody, please, until tomorrow."

"Sure thing, Odd. Sure thing."

Odd went away into the four o'clock light, Charlie at his side, and the men in the barber shop went and sat down, laughing.

The wind sighed outside, and slowly the sun went down and the snipping of the shears went on, and the men sat around, laughing and talking. . . .

THE next morning at breakfast, little Charlie Bellows sat thoughtfully spooning his cereal. Father folded his newspaper across the table and looked at Mother. "Everybody in town's talking about the quiet elopement of Odd Martin and Miss Weldon," said Father. "People, looking for them, can't find them."

"Well," said Mother, "I hear he bought a house for her."

"I heard that, too," said Father. "I phoned Carl Rogers this morning. He says he didn't sell any house to Odd. And Carl is the only real estate dealer in town."

Charlie Bellows swallowed some cereal. He looked at his father. "Oh, no, he's not the only real estate dealer in town."

"What do you mean?" demanded Father.

"Nothing, except that I looked out the window at midnight, and I saw something."

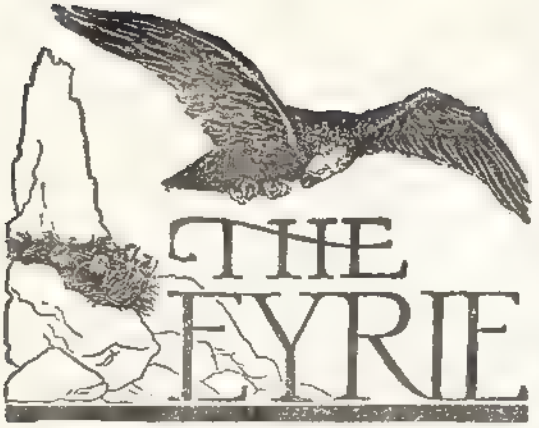
"You saw *what?*"

"It was all moonlight. And you know what I saw? Well, I saw two people walking up the Elm Glade road. A man and a woman. A man in a new dark coat, and a woman in a green dress. Walking real slow. Holding hands." Charlie took a breath. "And the two people were Mr. Odd Martin and Miss Weldon. And walking out the Elm Glade road there ain't any houses out that way at all. Only the Trinity Park Cemetery. And Mr. Gustavsson, in town, he sells tombs in the Trinity Park Cemetery. He's got an office in town. Like I said, Mr. Carl Rogers ain't the *only* real estate man in town. So—"

"Oh," snorted Father, irritably, "you were dreaming!"

Charlie bent his head over his cereal and looked out from the corners of his eyes.

"Yes, sir," he said finally, sighing. "I was only dreaming."



WEIRD TALES Goes on the Air!

RIGHT along with *reading* a fine horror yarn, it's grand entertainment to *hear* one. Before too long a time you'll find a horror fans "horror program" going on the air in many communities entitled "Stay Tuned for Terror." Adapted for radio by one of your (and our) favorites Robert Bloch from stories from WEIRD TALES magazine, this 15-minute program is going to please all shiver-and-shudder lovers, from the vampires of New England to the werewolf preserves in San Fernando!

We've already heard a couple of the programs and warn you right now that you've got a listening thrill coming your way. The very first story of the series is "The Bat Is My Brother" (Nov., 1944, WEIRD TALES) of tender memory in these pages and the radio version is a humdinger. We suspect even the "Bat" had to lie down for some time after hearing Bob Bloch's adaptation of his own WEIRD TALES thriller!

Follow a few weighty words from that dispenser of terror himself, Robert Bloch:

When I was a child I used to love to disguise myself and "scare" people. Now that I'm grown up, of course, a disguise is no longer necessary. Be that as it may, I've always retained a keen interest in dramatic presentation of a fantastic theme.

For many years I've had certain pet ideas about doing a radio "horror show" of my own ... in which the emphasis would be placed on atmosphere; featuring a dramatic narrator and original musical scores running throughout the program. I confess to being irritated, at times, by the type of scream-opera usually offered to listeners.

The closest I came to realizing my ambition in the past was when Laird Gregor did "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" over the Kate Smith hour in '44 ... and the same story was again broadcast this year on the Molle Mystery Theatre.

But now opportunity has knocked on the lid of my coffin in the shape of an assignment to adapt my own stories for "Stay Tuned for

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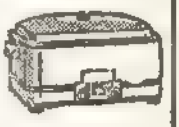

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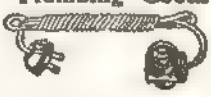

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Terror." This series of 15-minute programs is being transcribed at CBS studios in Chicago. A remarkable radio voice has been found in Craig Dennis, the narrator . . . and he is supported by a large and versatile cast. Original organ scores are used in each show, and the production is supervised by Johnnie Neblett of "So the Story Goes" fame.

As soon as the first series of 13 shows is completed, the recordings will be sold to sponsors throughout the country.

Naturally, I'm quite enthusiastic about the project, and I hope that WEIRD TALES readers will enjoy the programs. Of my first 13 scripts, 10 are directly adapted from stories written for WEIRD TALES. These titles include: "The Bat Is My Brother," "House of the Hatchet," "Satan's Phonograph, "Return to the Sabbath," "Black Bargain," "Soul Proprietor," "A Question of Etiquette," "The Creeper in the Crypt," "The Secret of Sebek," and "The Hands of Loh Sing."

Some of these stories are yet to appear: in some cases I have changed the titles . . . in all cases, naturally, I have taken the liberty of "telescoping" the action or altering the plot for purposes of dramatic emphasis.

WEIRD TALES magazine has generously permitted the use of its name, and I trust that the program will prove worthy of this distinction.

As this is being written, I am aware that it may be several months before the completed series will be placed "on the market" . . . and it naturally will be some time before there will be a general distribution. But I hope to go on with further series and it is my intention to keep on drawing the bulk of my material from my yarns in WEIRD TALES.

I'm very grateful to WT for giving me this opportunity to tell readers about this coming threat to their ear-drums . . . and I hope you'll "Stay Tuned for Terror."

—Robert Bloch

READERS' VOTE

THE WATCHER FROM THE SKY	ONE WAY TO MARS
DEVIL DOG	THE INN OUTSIDE THE WORLD
FOG COUNTRY	CARNABY'S FISH
THE DAI SWORD	QUAKING PROVIDENCE
THE DEAD MAN	

Here's a list of nine stories in this issue. Won't you let us know which three you consider the best? Just place the numbers: 1, 2, and 3 respectively against your three favorite tales—then clip it out and mail it in to us.

WEIRD TALES
9 Rockefeller Plaza New York City 20, N. Y.

What Napoleon Would Say to Hitler!

EDMOND HAMILTON writes us concerning his story "The Inn Outside the World" in this issue of WEIRD TALES:

Few ideas have ever been so fascinating to me as that of a meeting between the great men of different ages. In fact, most people have mused on this fancy at some time or another—in today's newspapers you'll find many speculations on what Napoleon would say to Hitler, and so on.

And the idea has always had that fascination. Years ago, when I was dipping into languages and literature in a youthful desire to read everything, I found more than one forgotten work built upon this theme.

There is, for example, a queer little book in crabbed medieval French, "Le Moyen de Parvenir" by Beroalde de Verville. It brings together in fanciful fashion the great characters of ancient and medieval times. The trouble is that they do nothing but tell ancient smoking-room stories when they do foregather, so that the historic interest is completely neglected.

To go even further back, the "Deipnosophistae" of the ancient Greek writer Athenaeus has a similar theme, but its author was apparently interested only in food. His characters exchange a vast number of exotic recipes, and it might as well have been a symposium of cooks.

I wanted to write a story about a secret brotherhood of time, based on the scientific knowledge of today, in which the chief interest would be in the observation of our present-day troubled world from the perspective of the past *and the future.* I hope that I've accomplished at least a little of that purpose in "The Inn Outside the World."

—*Edmond Hamilton*

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Ralph Phillips, 1507 S. W. 12th Ave., Portland 1, Ore.
Richard Roe, Jr., 608 S. E. 18th Ave., Portland 14, Ore.
Bobby Hugh Cooke, 115 W. Buckley, Brownfield, Tex.
Robert Robinson, 1353 Hamilton St., Niagara Falls, Ont., Can.
Mary Martin, 1890 7th Ave., New York, N. Y.
Caroline Smith, 950 Old Hickory, Jacksonville, Fla.
Ralph Burbank, 37 South Sixth St., New Bedford, Mass.
Joseph R. Sturdivant, 310 41st Ave., Meridian, Miss.
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Shirley Ann Wartley, 109 West 20th St., Cheyenne, Wyo.
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Philip Ward, 224 N. Somerset Ave., Crisfield, Md.
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We're sorry that lack of space prevents the inclusion of the names of all New Members. The rest will appear next time.

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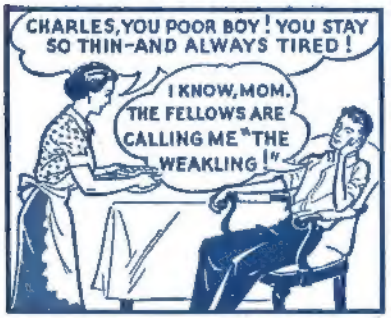

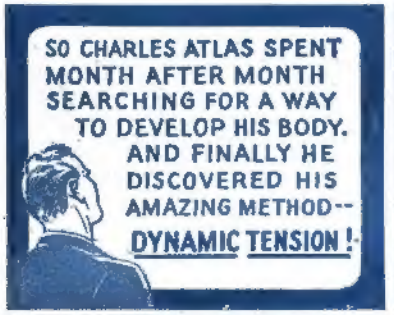

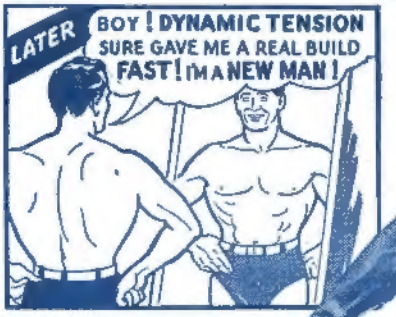

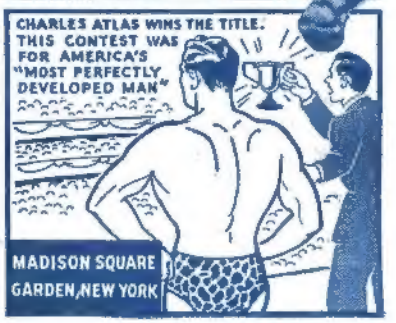

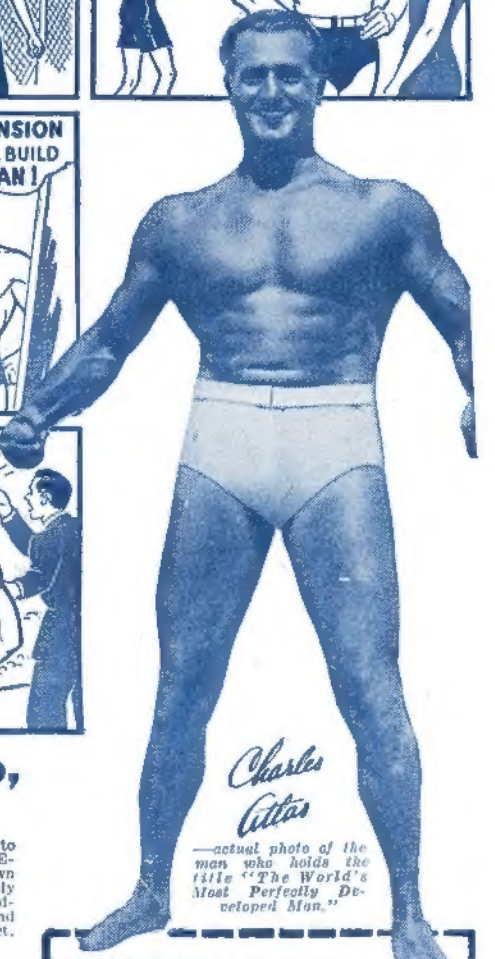

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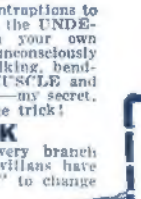

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